



CALL FOR SPORTS CAR ROAD BAN

Report by Richard Guttridge

THE father of a 21-year-old woman who was killed by a driver as he raced at 100mph on a Black Country street has called for 'performance' cars to be banned from the roads.

Gerard McManus told MPs high-powered cars have 'no place on our roads'.

His daughter Rebecca, a former Stourbridge student from Oldbury, was killed in May 2014 after a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution driven by Sukvinder Mannan crashed into her as she waited at a bus stop on Hagley Road West, Bearwood with friend Harriet Barnsley, who was seriously injured. Mannan was driving at 101mph in a 40mph zone.

Rebecca, a promising poet who had studied A-levels at King Edward VI College, had just completed a three-year degree in English.



Rebecca McManus

Garage manager Mannan, from Halesowen, was jailed for eight years after he admitted causing death by dangerous driving. The driver he had been racing, Inderjit Singh, of Cranbourne Avenue, Ettingshall, Wolverhampton, was given a one-year jail term, after pleading guilty to dangerous driving in his BMW M3. He had pulled out of the race seconds before impact.

Test

Mr McManus urged MPs to act in a written submission to a House of Commons inquiry into road traffic laws.

He said the Mitsubishi Evolution was advertised as a 'sports' car. He wrote: "As Mitsubishi clearly state the Evo has been developed through decades of competing successfully at the highest level of international rallying, why is it on the road?"

"More and more cars are being produced with a racing specification, they will never go anywhere near a race track, I find that a bit puzzling because surely the driver of these powerful cars will want to test the vehicle, but where? Well, on our roads obviously."

"Thirty mph speed limit, 40mph speed limit? It will not matter, and myself like so many road users will watch in horror as cars are driven at speed, or raced with others with no consideration for others or the consequences."

"Those behind the wheel are so often totally immature."

Mr McManus called for a halt to marketing being able to refer to performance or speed and people wishing to drive them needing a special category licence which allows them to drive on a racetrack.

MINISTER GETS SKATES ON FOR HIS FIRST VISIT



Acting minister for Sport David Evennett visits Unit 3 Sixty skate park with fellow Conservative MP Margot James, and sports projects officials Be Active Partnership director Simon Hall and acting chair of Be Active Partnership Simon Kirkland

A GOVERNMENT minister paid a visit to Stourbridge to see how community projects are encouraging youngsters to get involved in sport.

David Evennett was at Greenfield Primary School with Stourbridge MP Margot James as well as a skate park in the town in his first official visit since the Conservative MP for Bexleyheath and Crayford took over as acting minister for sport, tourism and heritage.

He watched pupils take part in the school's sporting heroes day and spoke about the impact of Government funding on sports coach-

ing and teaching. The minister also cast his eyes over Unit3Sixty, a 22,000sq ft facility bike and skate centre which was opened following support from Miss James.

To coincide with the visit, the Black Country BeActive Partnership announced the launch of two new projects, What's Your Motivation and the Black Country Sector Skills Action Plan, which aim to encourage more youngsters to get active.

Mr Evennett said: "It was fantastic to see the excellent work happening in the Black Country on both school and community sport."

"The Government is committed to getting more young people active which is why we are investing £150 million a year in primary school sport. This funding is helping to make a real difference at schools like Greenfield."

"The brilliant Unit3Sixty facility also shows how important it is to offer non-traditional sports like skateboarding, too, so that young people have a wide range of activities to choose from."

Miss James said: "I was delighted to welcome the sports minister to Stourbridge on his first official visit."

DEATH

Medics fought to save accident victim

A MAN has died after an accident at a delivery firm depot in Brierley Hill. The tragedy happened at Tuffnells Parcel Express, on The Wallows Industrial Estate.

Paramedics fought to save the man but he died at the scene after suffering a 'traumatic cardiac arrest'.

Emergency services were called to the premises in Fens Pool Avenue at around 9.50pm on Friday. Ambulance service spokesman John Hawker said: "Advanced life support was carried out at the scene by medics but despite everyone's best efforts, nothing could be done to save the man."

CRIME

Shotgun and £20k stolen in burglary

A SHOTGUN, jewellery worth around £8,000 and £20,000 cash were stolen during a raid on a Kingswinford house.

Burglars broke into the house in Ploverdale Crescent through a kitchen window. A Browning Super Sport 325 shotgun and 70 shotgun cartridges were taken with the cash and jewellery.

A mobile phone, iPads and a games console were also taken between 1.30pm and 9pm on Wednesday.

Anyone with information should call police on 101.

ROADWORKS

Quarry route repairs will last for a week

MOTORISTS are facing more misery on the roads with a new set of roadworks lasting a week near to an old quarry.

Ward councillor Dave Tyler said he had been in touch with highways engineers for 'a number of years' about the poor state of Enville Road, Wall Heath, where he says heavy vehicles using the quarry, which closed last year, have caused problems.

Substantial resurfacing works will now take place on the stretch of road between Swindon Road and Chapel Street. Enville Road was a key access route for trucks heading to the quarry, which operated on-and-off for 85 years.

INSIDE

SCHOOLS TOP OF THEIR CLASS



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Man killed by car was 'lying in road'



Run over — Anthony Maskell

A FATHER-OF-TWO was already lying in the road when he was run over and killed by a car that failed to stop, an inquest heard.

Anthony Maskell, 50, was found on Birchfield Lane, Oldbury, after being run over by a silver Nissan Micra.

Smethwick Coroners Court heard how Mr Maskell of Westgate Terrace, Rowley Regis, died from a serious and head injury on July 30.

The coroner ruled his death was as a result of a road traffic accident.

Mr Maskell, known as Tony to friends and family, worked as a lorry

driver. He had been drinking the night of the accident but the court heard it was unclear exactly how he had ended up in the road.

Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddique said: "Mr Maskell had been socialising, drinking, and bottles of cider were found with him."

Dual-carriageway

"He had attempted to cross the dual-carriageway on Birchfield Lane. It was not clear whether he had been to a public house but for some reason he was lying in the road."

"A Nissan Micra was caught on CCTV in the area and drove over him. Sadly he received a catastrophic head injury and died in Queen Elizabeth Hospital."

Mr Siddique said: "It is unclear exactly how he ended up lying in the road. On balance he died from a road traffic collision but I have not come to the conclusion it was an accidental death."

The search continues for the driver of the silver 2000/2003 Nissan Micra.

Mr Maskell's father, David, said: "Anyone with a bit of decency would have stopped."

Festival of rock music in memory of Christina

A FESTIVAL of rock music will be held to mark the memory of Halesowen 16-year-old Christina Edkins, who was stabbed to death on a Birmingham bus as she travelled to school in Halesowen.

It will be the third anniversary of Christina's death on March 7, when she was stabbed by paranoid schizophrenic Phillip Simelane on a bus as it travelled along Hagley Road.

Each year since the Leasowes High School student's death a Purple & Diamond bash has been held, organised by Christina's parents Kath and Jason, along with friends Andy Lea and Donna Burrows, among others.

The fund has also gone on to help several youth groups and projects and also delivers presents to the children's ward at Birmingham's Children's hospital each Christmas. But this year they will be hosting a festival on June 4 at The Rainbow Venues in Digbeth, which will see 15 bands play across two stages.

Organiser and family friend Dave Williamson said: "The event itself came from my love of live rock and metal music. I know quite a few bands. I decided to put this to good use and raise funds in memory of Christina and try to help boost the fund that has been set up for the good of children."

The event is supported by Kerrang Magazine and Dave is urging local businesses to get involved in the event, which is raising money for a scout hut.

Simelane, from Walsall, was detained indefinitely under the Mental Health Act.

Borough's schools come top of class for GCSEs

SCHOOLS in Dudley have come top of the pile for GCSE and A-level results in the Black Country for the second year running, according to the latest figures.

Dudley was top but the borough slipped down the rankings compared with last year's figures.

A total of 53 per cent of pupils gained five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths, a slight fall on last year's figure of 53.3 per cent.

Old Swinford Hospital School was the leading performer for the second year running with 81 per cent of pupils achieving benchmark grades.

Paul Kilbride, head of the school in Heath Lane, Stourbridge, said: "The stats reflect the hard work of the students and the staff."

Effort

"The kids put so much time and effort into their work. They are a credit to themselves and the school."

Summerhill School in Kingswinford came second on 70 per cent, while Bishop Milner Catholic College in Dudley and Windsor High School in Halesowen both saw 69 per cent of pupils gain the benchmark grades.

Windsor High headteacher Stephen Lanckham, said: "We have been delighted with another set of excellent results and recognise that they represent the hard work, commitment and collaboration of staff and students. Well done to all concerned."

Castle High School and Visual Arts College came 19th in the table with 35 per cent of 113 pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and maths.

The Cosely School, which is undergoing a consultation over its future, slumped down the tables to 20th place with just 31 per cent of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths.

The only school below Cosely School was the Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School in Stourbridge, where



Delighted – Windsor High School headteacher Stephen Lanckham with pupils at the school at Richmond Street, Halesowen

none of the 21 pupils who took GCSEs managed to gain benchmark grades.

Across the borough 53 per cent of pupils taking their exams in 2015 gained the Government's benchmark of five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and mathematics – a slight drop from the previous year's results.

Dudley sits in 117th position in the national table for GCSEs. Last year

the borough was 114th. The figures, which were released last week by the Department for Education, also showed that Dudley came 36th out of 152 local authorities for A-level results.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, vowed that the council would continue to build on the improvements shown by its schools in recent years.

He said: "While we are yet to receive the final validated results, we are pleased that early indications show that we have maintained our standards in GCSE attainment. We will continue to build on this over the next 12 months and support our schools and our young people in achieving the very best."

The borough had improved primary school performance last year.

Art works go on show at glass cone

THE Brierley Hill Society of Artists has returned with another exhibition at the Red House Glass Cone.

The show features over 75 original framed pieces of artwork, plus many unframed prints using watercolours, mixed media and acrylic.

Visitors will see a wide variety of works, covering local scenes like the cone itself, Himley Hall, Stewpony Locks, Ludlow and Bridgnorth to places further afield.

Other topics include animals, flowers, landscapes and even a cartoon of TV presenter and former MP Michael Portillo during a visit to the cone.

All of the work on display is for sale and prices start at £15. There is also a children's picture section. The exhibition will run until March 6.

Virgin jobs threat in group's revamp

AROUND 900 jobs are under threat at telecoms giant Virgin Media, after it announced plans for a major overhaul of the group. Virgin employs around 1,000 at its Eagle Court site in Birmingham and another 40 at The Waterfront in Brierley Hill.

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Work starts on easing Merry Hill congestion

A £500,000 road and travel scheme to improve bus services and ease traffic jams around Merry Hill shopping centre has now started.

The five-month project, which includes traffic light improvements and upgrades to bus shelters with the latest digital passenger information, started last week on High Street, Quarry Bank, near the junction with Coppice Lane.

An overhaul of the lights next to the popular shopping venue has been unveiled by Dudley Council bosses in an effort to cut down on congestion. Any problems at the ageing traffic signals can lead to massive tailbacks on the roads network around Merry Hill.

Council chiefs have successfully applied to Centro for £455,000 from its Better Bus Area Fund cash pot. The remaining £110,000 came from the council's Integrated Transport Block Allocation.

At the same time, there will be major resurfacing programme, which will be funded out of the £9 million pot the council was awarded through the Department for Transport's Challenge Fund and will bring improvements for all road users.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "It is a really busy stretch of road down there, so it is necessary the traffic lights need to be kept working at all times. The number of times they break down is too much and they are becoming very unreliable. We saw an opportunity for some funding, bid for it and got it."

Children can get active at centre

CHILDREN can take part in fun activities at Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge during half term.

The Dudley Council-owned facility in Bell Street will be hosting a week of special events from February 15 to 21, including gymnastics and roller disco.

The swimming pool, complete with slides, will be open daily with the roller disco on Monday afternoon, one-hour craft sessions on the Tuesday and trampolining classes on the Tuesday and Friday.

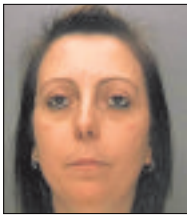
Trampolining sessions are running for children aged five to 15 on February 16 at 10 and 11am and February 19 at 1 and 3pm for beginners and February 16 at 12 and 1pm for those who are advanced. Classes cost £5.80 per session and must be booked.

Hall is the venue for wedding fair

A WEDDING fair is being held in Himley Hall on Sunday, February 7.

The event, from 10.30am to 4pm, includes bridal fashion shows at 11am, 1pm and 3pm. There will also be displays. Admission is £1.

Woman jailed after injuring officers



Jailed – Angela Miller

A WOMAN driver who left two police officers with serious injuries after ploughing into them in Tipton has been jailed.

Angela Miller crashed into the officers and a Mercedes they had pulled over for a routine stop check on the A461 Dudley Port.

Her VW Golf GTI then collided with the back of a marked police van which had its blue lights flashing.

Miller was suspected of being under the influence of alcohol but refused to give blood for analysis. She was also taken to hospital after the collision.

The 38-year-old of Newpool Road, Cra-

dley Heath, admitted failing to provide a blood sample and was sentenced to a five-month jail term at Sandwell Magistrates Court. She was also banned from driving for three years and 10 weeks.

The officers, who are both in their 40s and based in Sandwell, are still recovering from their leg injuries following the collision that occurred at 1.35am on January 4 last year.

In the crash the two officers were thrown into the air after the Golf hit the Mercedes and the police van, said West Midlands Police spokeswoman Deborah Edmonds.

Both officers suffered broken legs and one was knocked unconscious.

Miller was trapped in the wreckage of her car.

The 46-year-old officer has since returned to restricted duties but his 44-year-old colleague continues to be treated for leg injuries and has not yet returned to work.

Pc Phil Robins, of the West Midlands Police regional collision investigation unit, said: "This was the maximum custodial sentence that the judge could give her and in doing so he stated that he wanted this to serve as a deterrent to others."

Speeding killer driver gets 40 months prison

A MOTORIST who mowed down and killed a pedestrian has been jailed for more than three years.

Omar Tariq, aged 31, of Denton Road, Stourbridge, had been driving his girlfriend's courtesy car at speeds of up to 93mph shortly before the tragedy.

His estimated speed at the moment of impact was 61mph – more than 20mph over the speed limit – as he braked to avoid hitting 39-year-old Peter Price, who was crossing Hagley Road West at Quinton.

Sixteen members of the victim's family were at Wolverhampton Crown Court for the sentencing on Monday.

Tariq had denied being at the wheel of the Mercedes E250, claiming his girlfriend had been driving but his lie unravelled during police interviews, said Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting. He had driven on for a third of a mile after the accident, in November 2014, before phoning police.

Banned

Defending, Mr Paul Mytton, said Tariq had not been penalised for speeding or any other motoring offence in 13 years of driving.

Tariq pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving and not being insured to drive the car. He was jailed for three years and four months and banned from driving for five years.

Judge James Burbidge read testimonials from Tariq's relatives and colleagues, and a letter from the defendant himself setting out his feelings of remorse. He also read impact statements from Mr Price's family and friends.

The judge said: "This is a sad and tragic case. Mr Price's death has been a devastating blow to many." He described Tariq's speed as 'grossly excessive', particularly in a built-up area in a car he was not familiar with, but said there were 'powerful' mitigating circumstances.

"Whether you were seeking to put this sporty-type vehicle through its paces, I do not know. But you were of exemplary character. I accept that this has affected you deeply and that others speak highly of your integrity," said the judge.

Tariq's girlfriend, health and safety officer 23-year-old Parvinder Ubhi, of Jardine Close, Stourbridge, pleaded guilty to permitting use of the vehicle without valid insurance and obstructing police by falsely claiming she was driving. She received a 12-month community order and disqualified from driving for a year.



Artist Emma Callaghan, of Tivdale, will have some of her work showcased in an exhibition at the highly-rated Brick Lane Gallery in east London

Emma has brush with fame at gallery

AN aspiring artist is looking to make her way in the creative world with her first official exhibition next month – at a trendy London gallery.

Emma Callaghan, aged 22, from Tivdale, is preparing work for her first official exhibition at The Brick Lane Gallery in Shoreditch, London, from February 16 to 29.

Emma, who studied at Falmouth University, graduated in 2015 with a 2:1 BA Hons Degree in Fine Art.

Her work includes a multi-disciplinary approach to art, exploring such themes memory, time, environment and historical events.

Some of her work was inspired by her grandmother's dementia.

Emma, who works for West Bromwich Building Society, hopes to make more people aware of dementia, Alzheimer's and depression.

She said: "It's something I've been working towards for a very long time, so to have my work displayed in a gallery, especially in the iconic area of Brick Lane, is fantastic."

Her pieces have sold to art collectors.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parliament hears of Himley dog ban

DUDLEY South MP Mike Wood has urged his colleagues in Parliament to hold a debate over the new ban stopping dog walkers taking their animals into parts of Himley Park.

Dudley Council is installing signs in the grounds of Himley Hall (see page 15) to create dog-free zones, to encourage family outings and picnics.

Leader of the House, Chris Grayling MP, said in response: "My honourable Friend has made an important point about his constituency. I am sure that his comments will have been heard by his local authority."

Council offering help for homeless

DUDLEY Council is helping people who face sleeping rough.

The authority says anyone at risk of sleeping rough, or residents worried about someone at risk, can contact their homelessness prevention and response team 24 hours a day. The team will look for emergency housing solutions and work with people to resolve their housing needs. Housing boss Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "Housing is fundamental to individual and community wellbeing."

Call Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345.

Brighter crossing outside school

AN upgrade to a zebra crossing outside a Wordsley school has been completed. The new improved LED crossing, outside Belle Vue School, makes the crossing easily visible during dark winter mornings and nights.

Councillor Paul Brothwood, who has been campaigning for road safety measures, said: "Having worked with PCSOs on local speed watch events on Lawnswood Road, I am pleased to report that the upgrade to the zebra crossing has now been completed."

Libraries offer to loan out energy monitors

RESIDENTS in Dudley are being offered free use of energy monitors from their local library to keep track of how much energy their appliances use.

The scheme, sponsored by Dudley libraries and the Winter Warmth campaign, is designed to help people save money. The monitors can be borrowed free-of-charge by Dudley libraries members.

For advice and information about Winter Warmth phone (01384) 817086.

Station parking closed

MOTORISTS using a car park at Old Hill train station have been warned to expect disruption due to resurfacing works. Work at the station will run from February 1 to 12 with the number of spaces reduced. The car park will be closed completely on February 12 under plans revealed by Centro.

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THINGS on your bathroom shelf. Ever noticed how similar a tube of Oral-B toothpaste is to a tube of Neutrogena hand cream? Deeply unpleasant start to the day.

MUCH has been written and spoken about Jeremy Corbyn's plan for nuclear submarines without nuclear missiles. I like this little analogy from a Scottish website: "I took the blades out of my kitchen knives to see how they'd work. I could still squish tomatoes with the handle but my neighbours called me a ***** and are now parking on my driveway."

MEANWHILE, it emerges Mr Corbyn calls his family cat El Gato which is simply Spanish for "the Cat." We have a similar nameless arrangement at Chateau Rhodes where the resident tabby who wandered in seven years ago may be addressed in the course of a day as Puss, Pusskin, The Prince, Killer, Poppet, Chick, Button, Sweetie, Fuzzy Face, Sausage and Mate but is usually known as The Cat.

AFTER the massive coverage following the deaths of Mr Lemmy from Motorhead and Mr Bowie from Mars, you might think the media has exhausted their ability to go over the top. Not a bit of it. According to Radio 4 news at 11pm last Monday, the most important global event of the day, was the death of Glen Frey of The Eagles.

THE full veil, the medieval symbol of male ownership of women, is alien to British culture and an affront to equality. Like all religious trappings it sends out the divisive message: "I am different from you.



I am better than you," which is not a big step from saying: "You are lower than me. You are worth less than me." At a time when we are at war with people who make their

women wear the veil, to see it paraded in British streets is as offensive and threatening as seeing someone strolling through London in 1940 in the black uniform of Hitler's SS. We cannot ban the full veil by law. The essential freedom to wear what we choose is too precious to be extinguished. Yet David Cameron's declaration that he will support hospitals, schools, colleges and other places which insist on the "proper and sensible" measure of faces being visible is a welcome step. As the Tory MP Philip Hollobone puts it: "I don't want to live in a country where a police officer is veiled, where a newsreader is veiled, where a nurse or doctor is veiled." For the sake of freedom we cannot ban the full veil. But in the name of freedom we can despise it.

SCREECHING like a banshee, Sarah Palin pledges her support to Donald Trump. The Trump and the Chump. I can't think of a time when Hillary Clinton looked so appealing.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Finance boss says authority not in crisis

DUDLEY Council is not in a financial crisis despite a nearly four per cent increase on council tax for the next three years, says the authority's finance boss.

Plans to increase the tax were recommended for approval by members at Dudley Council's cabinet meeting on last week.

Despite the fash-strapped council facing a deficit of £23 million by

2019/20 if additional savings are not found, cabinet member for finance and legal services Councillor David Sparks insisted that they were 'not facing a crisis'.

He said: "I would like to make it clear that we should not talk ourselves into a crisis. Because ultimately there is no crisis. There has been a number of improvements to our forecast but even so the financial

challenge Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council faces is very serious."

He added that the borough's residents would continue to pay the lowest council tax rates in the region, despite an increase in council tax for the first time in six years.

Lowest

"It will still leave us with the lowest council tax in the West Midlands

and this is something we should be pleased about."

The increase would work out to be an extra 77p per week — or £40.04p per year — for people living in Band C properties.

Council leader Councillor Peter Lowe said: "We have worked relentlessly and left no stone unturned in a bid to plug the funding gap we have faced due to Government funding."

Super-council needs more powers — MP

By Peter Madeley

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has called on the Chancellor to give 'greater powers and more funding' to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

Labour MP Mr Austin urged George Osborne to give the WMCA more freedom over job creation, housing, transport and training.

Last year's devolution deal signed off by Mr Osborne paved the way for the WMCA, which could lead to more than £1bn of Government investment and a metro mayor.

Speaking at Treasury Questions, Mr Austin said he wanted to see a final deal that would devolve 'very significant powers' to the West Midlands.

Free

"The best way to support manufacturing businesses in the Midlands would be to free the region from London's control," he said. "The region has been stifled by Whitehall for far too long.

"If he gives us the powers and funds we need to strengthen the economy, to develop brownfield sites and tackle congestion, we will deliver more jobs, better skills, quicker transport and new homes."

Mr Osborne said that the West Midlands devolution deal would be 'one of the most exciting steps forward in the devolution of power in this country'.

Meanwhile, UKIP has vowed to continue its fight against the formation of the combined authority.

The party has urged people to get involved in the public consultation that has been launched over the WMCA, which includes Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley, Coventry, Solihull and Birmingham.

Wordsley Councillor Paul Brothwood, said: "Local people need to know the downsides of handing powers over to a metro mayor and giving more power to a cash-strapped Birmingham."

A thrilling night at the circus for Ayana



Ayana and her mother Adele Salmon meets Emilion Delbosq, from Newlife Foundation, and circus performers

A THREE-YEAR-OLD girl suffering with epilepsy and visual impairment enjoyed a magical day out at the circus.

Ayana Salmon, from Wolverhampton, met star performers first-hand after they dazzled crowds in Brierley Hill with circus skills and the story of Pinocchio.

She had received the tickets along with her parents and sisters from Cannock-based charity Newlife Foundation.

Mother Adele, aged 34, praised the show. "I think it was brilliant," she said. "It was the first time all of us have been to a circus. Ayana really enjoyed it, she was quiet throughout and that is a really good sign."

Ayana suffers with a complex condition that she has

had from birth. It includes hydrocephalus, epilepsy, a visual impairment and developmental delay, which has required many visits to hospital.

She went along with to the show with her parents and two sisters, aged 13 and 11. The show, called Pinocchio Joins The Circus, was held at Brierley Hill Civic Hall and was put on by the touring company Circus Starr.

Anaya went on stage during the interval to meet the acts.

Anya and her family received their tickets through the partnership of the circus and Newlife Foundation, which has previously provided Anya with equipment.

Newlife Foundation is the UK's largest charity that funds specialist equipment for children with disabilities.

Pensioner hurt after fall into car park drain

A PENSIONER was hurt when a metal drain cover gave way on a car park at Merry Hill shopping centre.

Jean Shipley was walking back to her car having left the Odeon cinema when she stepped on the loose grate, her foot falling through the gap.

She suffered a cut and swelling to her foot and was left in pain for weeks.

The 72-year-old, from Kingswinford, was left furious by what happened and said the drain cover was still loose when she went back to the cinema some weeks later.

She said: "I came down the ramp going to the car and my foot went down the hole in the drain. It was a bit of a shock really. It was badly bruised. I was in a lot of pain.

"I went back to the cinema to report it. The manageress came out and reached inside and retrieved the cover and put it back. She said it was nothing to do with the cinema and that Merry Hill looks after the site."

Mrs Shipley said she was told by Merry Hill officials that safety checks are regularly carried out at its car parks. She turned down an offer of a £20 gift voucher.

She added: "It could happen again. The drain cover was not secure, it was very loose. Any car going over it could dislodge it again. I think it should have been spotted."

Merry Hill spokesman Jonathan Day said: "Customer safety is always our number one priority and we have already investigated the matter and are working hard to resolve the cause of the incident."

Thousands attend theatre screenings

THOUSANDS of people have flocked to a Stourbridge venue to see West End shows screened live on screen.

Actors such as Dame Judi Dench and Benedict Cumberbatch have been beamed before audiences at sell-outs shows at Stourbridge Town Hall ever since a special screen was brought last September with more than 3,000 tickets have been sold.

The seven-metre wide screen receives both live and recorded London performances, called 'encore' showings, as well as movies for the venue's regular matinees.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The National Theatre Live Screen is providing to be an immensely popular project in the borough."

A comedy triple bill for Brierley Hill Civic

A TRIPLE bill of comedy acts will bring laughs to Brierley Hill Civic Hall in the summer. The venue will present Black Country comics 'The Fizzogs, Doc Brown and Kerry Goddman on July 16. Early bird tickets are £12.50 on 0870 320 7000.

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Sex offender has lost his damages bid for jail recall

A CHILD sex offender who was sent back to jail when a sniffer dog indicated cannabis was in his hostel room has lost a bid for financial damages.

Donald Burton, of Worcester Road, Dudley, was recalled to prison for a further 17 months after the dog sniffed out the remnants of spliffs in an ashtray.

Burton, aged 42, claimed there was no direct evidence he had been using drugs at the hostel in Stonnall Road, Aldridge, following his release from jail for sex crimes.

He had been jailed for seven years at Birmingham Crown Court in 2004 with an extended licence period of three years.

But he claimed at the High Court last week that his recall was wrong and he had been falsely imprisoned by the Ministry of Justice.

Burton vehemently denied using drugs at the hostel but admitted he had taken cannabis in the past.

Mr Stephen Field, defending, said Burton was eventually released again on May 11, 2009, having spent an extra 510 days in prison he should never have served.

The court heard that when Burton was released the parole board had concluded his recall had not been justified.

Mr Field said it meant his recall was unlawful and his incarceration amounted to false imprisonment.

But Mr Justice William Davis rejected his claim for thousands of pounds in damages, saying the Ministry of Justice officer who approved Burton's recall in December 2007 had been correct.

He said: "The crucial issue is whether there were reasonable grounds for concluding that he had been using cannabis at the premises. In my judgment, on the material placed before the relevant official, there were such reasonable grounds."

Car smashes into brick garden wall

A CAR careered across a front driveway before smashing into a brick wall in Stourbridge.

The Mercedes ploughed through the wall in Heath Farm Road close to the junction with Whittington Road. It ended up across the driveway while debris was strewn across the drive. Another car involved in the incident was unscathed.

No-one was injured in the accident at around 11.20am on Friday.

Music memorabilia and vinyl at fair

A RECORD fair will be returning to Stourbridge on Saturday.

The Kiki and Henry sale is being held in two rooms at The Talbot Hotel, Stourbridge High Street, from 11am to 4pm.

High hopes for future of school site



Firm commitments — Margot James MP

'REASONABLE progress' is being made to develop a derelict former school in Stourbridge that has been targeted by arsonists, says the town's MP.

Stourbridge MP Margot James said 'firm commitments' had been made for the Longlands site to retain as many of the historic buildings as possible.

Four developers have submitted bids to transform the former Longlands School, owned by Birmingham Metropolitan College (B-Met), which closed four years ago.

Ms James, who chaired a progress meeting on the site, said she hoped to have a further report ready before Easter.

"I'm confident that reasonable progress is being made on the Longlands site," she said.

Traffic

"Firm commitments have now been made to guarantee that as much of the historic buildings will be retained as possible, and that any new traffic created will be contained on the site. "I'll be remaining in regular con-

tact with the council and B-Met, and I will continue to keep residents informed of further progress.

"I am very hopeful that this will become a good development for the area and I hope to have more news before Easter."

Residents living nearby have been backed by the MP in their call for the site, which has been targeted by vandals, to be brought back into use.

Firms have been asked to register their interest in developing the buildings, which are expected to be for housing schemes.

Patients concerned over branch surgery closures

PATIENTS are concerned after two GP practices revealed plans to close branch surgeries.

A decision has been made to close Wordsley Green Medical Practice and Lower Gornal Medical Practice will be discussed next month.

Some patients have objected over concerns about accessibility by public transport and staffing.

Wordsley Green Medical Practice runs its main health centre in The Green, Wordsley, but will now close its branch surgery in Market Street, Kingswinford, on March 14. Letters will be sent to all patients about the closure.

The decision for closure, which was made at a Dudley CCG meeting on Friday afternoon, came as bosses stated the branch was no longer fit for purpose and didn't provide minor surgery and family planning services.

Spokeswoman, Laura Broster, said: "We intend this to benefit patients and improve services, including adding more consultation rooms. This could be viewed as making cuts or to actually make things better."

A proposal has also been tabled by Lower Gornal Medical Practice to close its Masefield Road branch.

Overall 9,789 patients are served by the two surgeries, according to a report going before Dudley CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee.

Loss

The report says around 1,350 patients use Market Street and many already attend the Wordsley Green for some surgeries. Officials from the practice said the branch is being run at a loss and a 'substantial' amount of investment would be needed to bring the site up to standard. The lease for the building is up at the end of March. Staff from the branch surgery would transfer to Wordsley Green. Some 36 patients raised objections to the closure.

Dudley CCG primary care contracts manager, Julie Robinson, said in the report: "The underlying principle for the CCG to consider when any such proposal is made to them is has the applicant been able to clearly demonstrate the grounds for closure and have they fully considered any impact on the contractors registered population."

At Lower Gornal, a petition has been received from 316 patients objecting to the closure. A meeting will be held on February 19.

Auschwitz drawings on display



Robert Perry and Dudley North MP Ian Austin with one of the artist's images of Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp

POIGNANT and moving drawings of Auschwitz by a Black Country artist are being displayed at Dudley College's Broadway Campus, in the run-up to a Holocaust Memorial Service.

Stourbridge artist Robert Perry created the work during a two-week trip to Auschwitz in 1997. The former Nazi concentration camp in Poland is preserved as a memorial to those who died there.

Setting off with only his draw-

ing and painting equipment, cameras, a phrase-book and a map, Robert headed for Auschwitz, travelling for three days in his Renault van, which has clocked up a staggering 268,000 miles over the course of his painting career.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin first saw Robert's work at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, and invited him to team up with the college to have his Holocaust work displayed there before the

borough's annual Holocaust memorial service.

That will take place at the college's Broadway campus tomorrow (Friday), at 12.30pm, when death camp survivor Susan Polack speaks about her experiences.

Robert said: "Auschwitz is a very moving and grim place. Everybody should visit Auschwitz at least once. These have to be some of my darkest pieces of work."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Double by-election in borough wards

RESIDENTS in two Dudley wards will be heading for the polls next month in a double by-election.

The by-elections have been called in the St James's ward and the Kingswinford North and Wall Heath ward on February 25.

Councillor Mary Roberts, who represented St James's, died in November. Natalie Neal stood down from her position as councillor for Kingswinford North and Wall Heath last month for personal reasons.

Poll cards will be delivered to 12,000 homes over the next few days.

Former church will be a boxing club

A FORMER church will be turned into a boxing club, after plans were given the green light.

Council planners have given the go-ahead to Brooklands Boxing Club's scheme for the old Mount Tabor Methodist Church in Sedgley Road, Woodseton.

The building has not been used for about a decade, according to the planning application.

A boxing ring will be installed on the ground floor, with evening sessions taking place from Monday to Friday.

Billy gives talk on history at library

A BLACK Country raconteur will give a talk on the region's history next month.

Billy Spakemon's talk, entitled 'Two Blokes Two, Chairs an a Chap called John' takes place at 3.15pm on Tuesday, February 23, at Dudley Library, St James's Road.

It will take place on the second floor meeting room at the library and admission is £3.

For more information call (01384) 815560.

Memories and stories to be told at centre

STORYTELLING sessions and reminiscences of the past are being held on the first Monday of each month at Lye Community Centre.

The events are free at the centre on Cross Walks, with the first story session on Monday, February 1, at 2.30pm, where the corner shops of the past will be discussed.

It will be hosted by Christine Squires, the centre's new manager, and Councillor Gaye Partridge will talk about local shops in the past.

Disco in aid of woods

GO and get your boogie shoes for a 1960s and 70s disco being held in Smethwick next month to raise funds for Warley Woods Community Trust.

The event is on Friday, February 5, from 7.30pm until midnight, at Thimblemill Rec on Thimblemill Road. Tickets are £5, call 0121 4292 440.

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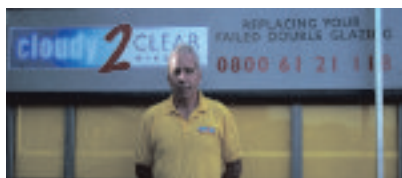
Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

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area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



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Dog owners bite back over Himley ban

IT is obvious that if A Blake needs someone to explain to him why there has been so much coverage on the 'dog ban' then his letter (Letters to the Editor, January 21) is of no value other than to be controversial or a need to see his name in the paper.

If I may I will enlighten him. The main reason is that a vast number of people who use Himley Hall are dog owners who use the grounds on a

regular basis, most of whom are retired or infirm and find the area proposed as 'dog free' the easiest option.

I might add that we use Himley seven days per week, 52 weeks of the year, thus contributing a huge amount of revenue through our yearly parking fees or daily parking fees, as opposed to picnickers who use the park once or twice a year when the sun shines.

There already exists a picnic area adjacent to the golf cafe that is ideal for them, offering hot or cold drinks and snacks.

Children also like to be around the

pool feeding the ducks and geese, which brings in to question the real reason for the proposed 'picnic area'.

The dog owners would, with respect, like to know how they intend to marshal the proposed area?

Will caravans still be allowed to park there along with the dogs they own?

Will the area still be used as a overflow car park in the case of certain events being held at the park, thus preventing picnickers from accessing the area?

D WHITE
Dudley

Appalled by faulty car lights

IN addition to drivers who do not switch their lights on early at dusk and in inclement weather, I am appalled by the large number of vehicles with deficient lights.

Drivers need to check their lights regularly and rectify defective ones.

The only other check which occurs is the MOT test which takes place only annually and, in the case of new vehicles, only after the first three years.

In the meantime, the police should be more active by setting up roadside spot checks not with a view to prosecuting but, instead, requiring defects to be rectified within a short specified period. This would seem to be more sensible than holding speed checks and prosecuting drivers who exceed the speed limit by a relatively small margin.

Priority given to this issue is necessary because of long hours of darkness and bad visibility at this time of year.

D PARISH
Rowley Regis

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chron@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

True FA Cup spirit is in lower leagues

THE Premiership now seem to be a law unto themselves in British football. Playing a fixture list in the week following an FA Cup round has given managers just the excuse they need to field weakened teams in what has been known as one of the world's most famous knockout cup competitions.

In contrast non-league clubs treat the FA Cup with the respect it deserves. Starting way back in August, they attempt to battle through the early rounds and generate a bit of cup glory and the prize money that goes with it.

Just take a look at the achievement of Stourbridge FC this season when they reached the second round, and created unprecedented levels of interest in the area with sell out games against Kidderminster and Eastleigh. That's why it is so sad that some Premiership managers don't want to be bothered.

Hard pressed Division One and Two clubs can benefit financially from a good cup run.

The third round produced some exciting games, let's hope the next round does the same, with supporters filling the grounds to show just how important the FA Cup is to English and Welsh football — it's part of our heritage.

A P CUFF
Stourbridge

Migrants history is repeating

HISTORY constantly repeats itself as we simply find new ways to make old mistakes.

Many people insist that mass immigration is good for the economy, as though this excuses the inevitable damage to the environment, national infrastructure and the host population.

Therefore, it is all the more astonishing to hear of the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve. Hundreds of women sexually assaulted by a gang of about a thousand men of 'North African or Arabic appearance' while the police did nothing. Human rights groups belatedly that asylum seekers must not be blamed.

The main beneficiaries of mass immigration are unscrupulous employers who exploit migrants as cheap labour. Do we want to pander to their greed and the flawed agenda of an increasingly overbearing 'Politically Correct' (PC) brigade?

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Funds sent to Cumbrian flood appeal

Kingswinford TG

IN December, there was no formal monthly meeting. Instead, the members met for a sumptuous festive lunch at the Lodge in Dudley.

Food featured prominently in early January, when Luncheon Club members met for lunch and to catch up on the news.

On January 11 the regular activities resumed and members were welcomed by chairman Enid Fennell, who wished everyone a Happy New Year. This was followed by an entertaining evening of song and readings performed by Liz and Brian Dickenson.

This was greatly enjoyed and they were thanked by Kath Turner.

However, before this jollity, there was business to be dealt with. Following the reading and signing of the minutes, it was announced that collection instead of Christmas cards had raised £60. It was unanimously decided to add the TG's small charity account to this and send it to a Cumbrian flood relief charity.

The flowers to enhance the room were provided by Josie Smith who donated them as extra raffle prizes. The raffle prizes were then won by Sally Fowler, Wendy Iley and Chris Moy.

Members were asked to consider joining the committee as there are currently members who have other commitments which are causing difficulties.

The speaker at February's meeting will be Mary Bodfish who will explain why 'You can't Abdicade and Eat It'.

Cheers to history of Black Country beers

Ambeclothe History Society

KEITH Hodgkin's presentation on 'Beer and Breweries in the Black Country' started by him putting some context into his talk. It was not, he said, a definitive history of local pubs and breweries but more a personal reflection as a real ale fan on his experiences and memories of those establishments from the mid-1970s to present day.

The roots of his liking for beer and enthusiasm for the places where the amber nectar could be obtained, stemmed from a 1972 calendar which pictorially featured Black Country pubs. He then decided to visit all of the pubs on the calendar.

There were nine breweries in the Black Country at that time, the independent family-run ones such as Ma Pardoe's (Netherton), Simpkins (Brierley Hill), Holden's (Woodsetton), Batham's (Brierley Hill) and the larger scale corporate ones like Bank's (Wolverhampton), Hanson's (Dudley), Mitchells & Butlers (Cape Hill), Springfield (Wolverhampton) and Highgate.

The talk proceeded with Keith reviewing each brewery in turn, giving some of the history behind each of them and the beers they produced with personal anecdotes along the way.

He then related a most amusing personal story of his first attempt at 'the Batham's Nine' which in the 1980s involved visiting each pub for a pint during the course of the day.

Approaching the end of the talk, Keith came forward in time to the 1990s when new breweries were starting to open. He mentioned a number of them who are located very close to or operate in Stourbridge and are enjoying great early success.

In summarising Keith was pleased to hear of 13 new breweries starting up since



Batham's Brewery in Brierley Hill in 1920



The main Holden's Brewery on the right

he was a young man despite experiencing many tragic losses. There are now more active breweries (17) in the Black Country than there were in the early 70s, offering a lot more choice and generally some fantastic beers, brewed by people who are proud of their Black Country location and heritage.

Keith was thanked for his informative talk and the evening concluded with generous applause and the drawing of the raffle which most appropriately included a range of bottled ales.

The next meeting is on Wednesday February 10 at 7.30pm in The Lehr Theatre at the Ruskin Centre. Max Keen will talk on The Anglo-Zulu War, providing a real insight into the battles and the involvement and bravery of local soldiers.

New members welcome to join circle of friends

Dudley Widows & Friends Circle

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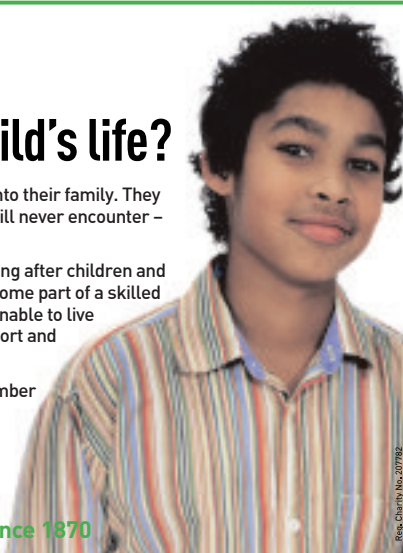
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Family triumph in their battle over the badgers



Trying to keep badgers out — Lucy Davis, of Norton, with Councillor Colin Elcock, who has backed their campaign

THEY have wrecked shrubs and plants, dug holes in the lawn and left children unable to play in their own garden.

But after an 18-month-long campaign, a Stourbridge couple say they are relieved to be finally free of a destructive family of badgers.

Lucy and Mark Davis, of Norton, with their three young boys, had grown increasingly concerned with the badger invasion.

The badgers made themselves at home creating a network of setts under the garden. However, the Davis

family were left at their wits' end with strict legislation in place curbing attempts to remove the pests.

They filmed the animals on CCTV until they were successful in securing a licence allowing experts to move the badger family. Despite the work costing thousands of pounds, they say it has been worth it.

"They have blighted our lives for a while but we are so relieved that we are now badger free," said Mrs Davis, of South Road. "It has felt like a war at times, but the irony is we quite like the animals, me and Mark are both members of the Wildlife Trust."



Nocturnal visitors — two of the badgers

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Strictly speaking this was best yet

REVIEW

By Sue Attwater

IT'S easy to sum up the Strictly Come Dancing tour. Just one word, three syllables – A-MAZ-ING!

The show recently was named as the best entertainment programme in the National TV awards and the follow-up tour certainly gets my vote as the best to date.

The dancing, settings and effects were all superb – just one quibble. Why when the 'Magnificent Seven' are strutting their stuff do they have to have professional dancers on the stage performing with them. Good as the pros are it is the celebrities we are there to watch.

Close

The marks from the judges were close throughout but it was the current champion The Wanted's Jay McGuiness dancing with Aliona Vilani – who recently announced she was leaving the TV show – who again picked up the glitter ball on the first night of the tour at Birmingham's packed Barclaycard Arena.

He and Countryfile's Anita Rani and professional partner Gleb Savchenko were neck and neck at the end but Jay clinched it. His jive dance from the Movie Week was sensational and had the audience cheering and stamping their feet.

Gleb did get his shirt off a few times to win fans over. Certainly judges Craig Revel Horwood and Bruno Tonioli were impressed. They were joined, of course, by head judge Len Goodman who admitted that he really missed going on the tour last year. Compare



Mel Giedroyc, on top of the cake, surrounded by the Strictly crew

was Mel Giedroyc who joked with the celebrities after each dance leading to one interesting revelation. Jay, when asked where he kept the glitter ball, said it had pride of place – in his twin brother's toilet. Mel also persuaded Len to give her a quick tango lesson while the votes were being counted. Hilarious!

The phone votes by the audience come after the second dances and 10p of each call goes to Sport Relief.

Referring to the tour as the Great British Dance Off – instead of her usual Bake-Off role – she had appeared at the start of the show from a giant cake, she was obviously loving her role. Although I am not sure why she had to keep referring to her prompt cards so often.

The rest of the line-up included this year's TV finalist actress Georgia May Foote dancing with new recruit Giovanni Pernice. Known as team GG they made the perfect couple – on and off stage from what it is reported.

Call the Midwife Star Helen George dancing with Aljaz Skorjanec scored highly with their lovely Viennese

Waltz and Ainsley Harriott, dancing with Karen Clifton instead of his regular partner Natalie Lowe, who had to pull out through to illness, may not have had perfect technique but certainly kept the judges and audience amused.

Previous strong contenders from earlier TV shows were The Saturdays' singer Frankie Bridge who could not go on the tour last year as she was pregnant. She danced with Kevin Clifton who was obviously impressed with how much she had remembered.

Shake

Last, but not least, was EastEnders' Jake Wood. He danced with Janette Manrara and he certainly could still 'shake his booty'.

The judges, referred to by Mel as the good, the bad and the ugly – needless to say who she meant, marked generously with 10 for many dances apart from Craig who held on to his 10 until the end giving it to Jay for his jive.

And I am sure the audience vote for the tour would also be a resounding 10!

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

Is this woof justice as zones banning canines brought in

PERMANENT signs will be placed around Himley Hall when dogs are banned from using certain parts of the attraction.

It comes despite angry dog owners signing a petition against the move to ban pets from sections of the site and protests against the proposed 'dog free zones'.

Council bosses want to cater more for picnicking families by stopping pets using a third of 18th century hall's gardens. The ban, which comes into effect on February 1, will prevent dogs from using open spaces stretching between the Main Gate and West Gate.

Sweet grant going to fund extra training

A GROUP in Quarry Bank helping those who have experienced domestic abuse is celebrating after receiving a £300 donation from the Galaxy Hot Chocolate Fund.

Survivors of Domestic Abuse (SODA) offer online support to both men and women.

The group was originally set-up as a Facebook page by Sam Billingham. Group founder Sam said: "We are really keen to extend our services to offer face-to-face help for victims."

"This donation from the Galaxy Hot Chocolate Fund will be part payment toward a training course to enable me to gain the required qualification to travel around the country offering professional workshops."

Galaxy Hot Chocolate helps community groups and charities across the UK and Ireland by donating cash awards of up to £300. Applications to the fund can be made on the Galaxy Hot Chocolate website www.galaxyhotchocolate.com

Some of the temporary signs put up by the council, warning of the changes, had been removed in recent weeks, but not by council staff.

Permanent

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We're currently organising for permanent signs to be placed within the park to identify the dog free zone but until then temporary signs are in place."

But parent Simon White, from Sedgley, said he wanted his two children, aged six and eight, to spend time in the countryside where they could run and play safely away from dog faeces.

"Everywhere we go there is dog faeces and owners who insist their dog is not a problem and is okay to be off its lead and will not bite," he said.

"They have gradually taken over every bit of parkland and our canal walking paths – and heaven help anyone who challenges that."

"We'd like to thank Dudley Council for taking this action, which although will not be enforced at least is one small step in the right direction."

Mr White, aged 52, said he did not see any difference between yobs and 'so called respectable people' with dogs who never cleaned up after their pets.

My Mary is a real diamond says husband



Gordon and Mary Hemmings celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary at home in Swindon, near Wall Heath

A 'DIAMOND' – Gordon Hemmings' apt description of his wife Mary as they celebrate 60 years of marriage.

Mr Hemmings, aged 82, and his wife, 81, marked the occasion at their Swindon home on January 16. He said: "Mary is a diamond, she is brilliant."

"She is a fantastic gardener, cook and a mother. I love her today more than the day I met her."

Asked about the secret to a long and

happy marriage, he said: "It is not always sunshine but you have to work together to make marriage last."

Mr Hemmings has been disabled since he was hit by a lorry in 1959.

He added: "My disability is showing now, I have to walk with sticks."

They first met at a garden centre in 1955 and married the following January with Mr Hemmings admitting it was 'love at first sight'.

Mrs Hemmings has always been a keen gardener.

They have one daughter, Sonia, 48, and a grandson.

Mr Hemmings served two years in national service, and has also worked for an insurance company, as a cashier at a Dudley bakery and as an administrator at a solicitors in Brierley Hill. Mrs Hemmings worked at a factory that made chains for Ford.

Council under fire over move to end support

A SCHEME which helps hundreds of families struggling to make ends meet in Dudley every year will be scrapped under new council cost-cutting plans.

Dudley Council aims to get rid of all of the funding for the Local Welfare Assistance scheme by 2018. Hundreds of families currently receive food and fuel vouchers, as well as furniture and white goods, under the scheme.

The council wants to slash £100,000 off the budget for the upcoming year before withdrawing all of the funding in 2017/18 but is in talks with outside bodies to take over the running of the scheme.

UKIP leader Councillor Paul Brothwood criticised the council for aiming its cuts at 'the poorest members of society'.

He said: "Again the Labour-controlling group is focusing on the most vulnerable people in society. I appreciate the council needs to cut budgets drastically but to rectify its mistakes it shouldn't focus on the poorest members of society. Let's start the cuts at the top, not the bottom."

A report says the current scheme could be taken over by outside bodies.

The report states: "The current scheme assists residents in Dudley who are without sufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses an immediate and substantial risk to their health and safety."

Enrol youngsters for a swimming course

PARENTS can sign up their children for a series of special swimming lessons in Stourbridge.

Crystal Leisure Centre is holding the 30-minute swimming sessions, which include tuition from qualified instructors, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The courses will help parents introduce their children to water.

The courses run until March. Call the centre on (01384) 812800.

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Man jailed for raping girl, 13

A MAN who repeatedly raped an underage girl has been jailed for 19 years.

Darius Majchrzak, who has links to Dudley and West Bromwich, was also convicted of making indecent images of a child.

The 43-year-old was found guilty of 12 counts of rape and three counts of making indecent images of a child at Birmingham Crown Court. Eight of the rape charges related to a child under the age of 13.

The offences, which took place between 2006 and 2012, came to light as police were investigating an unrelated matter.

West Midlands Police were able to convict him of four of the attacks outside of the UK. Majchrzak, of no fixed address, denied all of the offences against the victim but was convicted after a trial.

Detective Inspector Sarah Booth, from the child abuse investigation team, said: "These were really serious offences and at no point did he take any responsibility for his crimes."

Painting captures comedy characters



The Fizzogs, Deb Nicholls, Jacky Fellows and Sue Hawkins, with the painting of them in their granny guise

BLACK Country comedy trio The Fizzogs said thank you to their backers at a special event in The Old Glasshouse pub in Dudley.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho joined representatives from Holden's Brewery, C & D Consultancy and Black Country Kitchens at the event hosted by Fizzogs Sue Hawkins, Jacky Fellows and Deb Nicholls.

Deb said: "It was a fantastic chance to network as well as say thank you to everyone who has helped us the past year."

Last year the comedienne, who gained fame with their dancing grannies sketch, won rave reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and sold out a show at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre. Their pantomime, 'Freezin'', a Black Country spoof of Disney's Frozen, is currently on tour.

The trio have also been immortalised in art by chairman of the Dudley Society of Artists, Keith Turley. Deb added: "To save us from just sticking it in the office, we have decided to put it in different locations around the Black Country - at the minute it is in the mayor's parlour."

University involved in start-up schemes

WOULD-BE entrepreneurs are being offered fixed-rate loans in a scheme launched by the University of Wolverhampton. The university has teamed up with Virgin StartUp to deliver the Government-funded scheme.

It is aimed at helping Black Country people put their business ideas into practice, encouraging entrepreneurship and promoting economic growth.

Budding businesspeople receive a unique offering of mentoring, finance, practical advice and support.

Tony Collins, non-executive director at Virgin StartUp, said: "We're delighted to be working with the University of Wolverhampton to help local entrepreneurs get their business ideas off the ground, not only financially but by providing an invaluable network of advice and support."

For information about Virgin StartUp loans, email Rose Judeh-Elwell at r.judehwell@wlv.ac.uk or go to www.wlv.ac.uk/virginstartup

Hundreds are victims of dog attacks across Black Country

DOG and animal attacks have seen 336 people suffer bite wounds in the past two years in the Black Country, including at least 21 youngsters under three years old.

And 161 of those people bitten were taken to hospital, figures released by the West Midlands Ambulance Service reveal.

The figures come after it was revealed dog attacks have soared 76 per cent in the UK over the past

decade, according to Health and Social Care Information Centre statistics.

Sandwell and West Birmingham was the worst hit area, with 108 attacks registered.

Baby

Of those, one victim was a baby, six were infants, 11 were children and 61 were adults.

In Dudley, 85 people were attacked, including five infants, 11 children and 61 adults.

There have been 73 Walsall victims, including one infant, 17 children and 46 adults, while in

Wolverhampton, 70 people were bitten, including two babies, six infants as well as seven children and 46 adults. Ages were not given for 46 of those bitten in the Black Country.

Victims included a two-year-old and her sister, who were bitten by an Akita/Husky crossbreed, in Netherton in July last year.

A firefighter on duty was bitten when helping put out a garden fire at a house in Tividale last August. He was bitten by a Japanese Akita.

An ambulance spokesman said: "If someone suffers an animal bite we would encourage them to wash

out the wound with cold running water. The affected area should then have a clean dressing applied.

"If you feel the wound needs medical attention then please either call NHS 111 for advice or visit your local walk in centre.

"If the wound does not stop bleeding after direct pressure being applied for a few minutes, then the patient should make their way to their local A&E department. If you feel the animal bite is life threatening then please call 999 immediately."

Driver trapped after car rolls

THREE people were injured — and one of them was trapped for half an hour — after a two-car crash near Himley Cricket Club. A collision at just after 6pm on Friday saw one of the cars roll over.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "The driver of the car that rolled over, a man believed to be in his 40s, had suffered multiple lacerations in the crash and also a reduced level of consciousness. The man received emergency treatment at the scene from medics and with the assistance of the fire service was removed from the vehicle. He was trapped for around 30 minutes. The man was transferred by ambulance to Russells Hall Hospital for further treatment."

A woman passenger had cuts to her hands and the man driving the other vehicle received treatment for chest and wrist injuries.

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Gazing back at indie guitar rock

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

WEDGED between the Manchester excess of Baggy and the birth of Brit Pop, the indie rock music scene of the late 1980s and early 90s hasn't been given its due.

Lumped together under the rather pejorative term 'shoegaze', this movement saw bands turning to the likes of The Velvet Underground, Echo & The Bunnymen, Siouxsie & The Banshees and scene-setters The Jesus & Mary Chain for inspiration. It remains a highly influential era for today's rock scene.

It could be argued that these bands, though few of them became famous names, did more to mould the current indie rock scene than the American grunge rockers who were higher profile at the time.

A handsome new various artists five-disc boxed set from Cherry Red Records, **Still In A Dream: A Story of Shoegaze (1988...1995)**, sets the record straight. It comes in the form of a hardback book with details on all the bands and essays on shoegaze from UK and American perspectives.

The term shoegaze covers a broad spectrum but at its most recognisable it combined swirling guitars with submerged vocals, as typified here by Swervedriver, Slowdive and Pale Saints. Many of the bands were on such labels as 4AD, Creation and Hut, and other leading lights included Ride, Lush, Curve, The House of Love, and Drugstore.

Some can be seen as psychedelic and drone rockers, including the whole space rock sub-genre created by Spacemen 3 and their spin-offs including Sonic Boom, Darkside, Spectrum and the still active Spiritualized.



Birmingham shoegazers Sweet Jesus hit the scene with Phonefreak Honey in 1992

Other bands included on this 77-track package that are still active (or re-activated) include The Boo Radleys, Flaming Lips and Mercury Rev.

Although the scene was largely Thames Valley based, there are some West Midlands bands featured. These include Birmingham outfits Drop (with Mirrored) and Sweet Jesus (with Phonefreak Honey), plus Coventry's Adorable (Sunshine Smile).

Shoegaze went on to influence bands across the planet, judging by the obscure groups also included from Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and across north America.

This set is not just an exercise in nostalgia, it can be recommended to indie rock fans of all ages.

The **James Taylor Quartet** are best known for stomping Hammond organ instrumentals, that have made them firm favourites on the Acid Jazz and Mod music scenes. On the **Rochester Mass** the quartet join forces with the 40-strong Rochester Cathedral Choir in an attempt to blend a Latin-sung choral mass with jazz/funk elements.

It sounds like a recipe for disaster

but, although some church music purists may not agree, I think it works rather brilliantly. The sacred quality of the voices are enhanced by the thoughtful jazz-settings, especially the excellent work by flautist Gareth Lockrane.

Recorded in just one day, and dedicated by James Taylor to his late father Clive, the Rochester Mass reaches its sublime peak with Gloria.

Californian sunshine pop band **Harpers Bizarre** are best known for their version of Simon & Garfunkel's The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy). **The Complete Singles Collection (1965-1970)**, which is mostly mono, features that swinging 60s favourite along with their version of Come To The Sunshine, the Van Dykes Parks song which heralded the summer of love, and 24 other tracks.

If I've Been Dreaming, when they were The Tikis, reveals a strong Beatles influence, before they developed a softer, harmonious sound. But for every 60s pop gem there are at least a couple of old fashioned mom and pop standards or show tunes. More barber shop than Beach Boys.

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Tony's cautionary tale on hi-tech fraudsters

IT all started with joining a personal wifi hotspot at a popular cafe. Then, within three months, Mr Smith had lost everything – including his home.

'Britain's greatest fraudster' Tony Sales last week gave a graphic demonstration to business leaders on just how easy it is to find yourself in the same position as a victim of Cyber Crime.

He left his audience in shock as he spoke at the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson's Annual Business Summit at Maple House, in Corporation Street, Birmingham.

Mr Sales went through step-by-step how a fraudster would go about targeting a victim, and the most frightening part was how easy it was to lose it all. He can literally steal your house from his mobile phone.

Legitimate

The demonstration started with Mr Smith, a made-up name, going for his regular coffee at Starbucks, and joining an open wifi network called 'Starbucks'. It would seem legitimate to all, but unbeknown to Mr Smith, the wifi network he joined was actually a personal hotspot set up by Mr Sales.

By joining the network, Mr Sales got access to Mr Smith's emails. From his emails Mr Sales got hold of Mr Smith's phone numbers from an online grocery shop receipt, and learnt Mr Smith was a keen shopper at a particular website.

The following day, Mr Sales placed a call to Mr Smith's work pretending to be from his favourite shopping website. Cutting a five-minute conversation short, Mr Smith handed over his debit card details to part with £33 to get some vouchers for later discounts. He was told that the £33 would show



Britain's 'greatest fraudster' Tony Sales, with Commissioner David Jamieson up on his bill as a Post Office transaction because this new scheme was being run in conjunction with them.

Mr Sales paused here, and asked the audience why £33 and the Post Office connection? Nobody knew, but it was blindingly obvious when he said, £33 is the amount it costs with the Post Office to divert mail from one address to another for three months.

Now, Mr Sales was receiving all of Mr Smith's personal post and possessed his debit card and bank details. Mr Sales would then filter out what he needed and drop the rest of Mr Smith's post back to his home before he got up in the morning. He also created several IDs, including a passport and a BT bill for Mr Smith.

The aim at this point was clear for Mr Sales. "Other fraudsters may cash out here for £20,000 but I'm going to strip Mr Smith bare of everything,"

he announced to the room at Maple House. He learns that Mr Smith is a builder, earning £500 a week, and is someone who likes to save his money. He opens a bank account in his name slowly drips money from one account to another then changes the address the bank has on file for Mr Smith.

Mr Sales then buys a £40,000 Mercedes with £400 monthly repayments, sells the car to an offshore buyer for £20,000 and makes £17,500 profit after moving £2,500 into Mr Smith's account to cover the repayments for six months.

During the process of receiving Mr Smith's mail, Mr Sales discovers Mr Smith only has £50,000 left to pay on his mortgage for his £450,000 home. The bank offers 'Mr Smith' £300,000 to remortgage and, as Mr Sales announces with a grin, "within four hours Mr Smith has lost his home".

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The stands are packed for an FA Cup game at Bilston in November 1968



Bilston town, in the Dr Martens Midland Division from 2001



Author Jay Hearst with former Bilston FC player Nick Pugh



Bilston Town FC's grandstand from a few years back



The Bilston Town FC team in the 1958/59 season

Fan tells his beloved Bilston Town's story

A DIE-HARD fan of a semi-professional football team has told of his 'labour of love' after releasing a book chronicling the 121-year history of his club.

Supporter Jay Hearst has spent the last two years compiling information from every single season from 1894 for his book entitled *The History of Bilston Town Football Club*.

The 37-year-old has been 'burning the candle at both ends' to get the book ready for print, and now his hard work, with the help of club chairman Graham Hodson and vice-chairman Denise Frankham, has come to fruition.

It tells the tales of the all-conquering 1900-01 squad that won six trophies, as well as the side that almost a century later held a youthful Manchester United featuring top goalkeeper Mark Bosnich to a draw in a pre-season friendly, and a Steelmen star who lined up for England.

MEMORY LANE

By Nick Humphreys

Mr Hearst, a sales worker by day from the Bilston area, said: "It includes a small section for every single season, with gaps of course for World Wars One and Two. Some sections naturally are bigger than others, mostly based on the information I was able to find."

"It does include the entire league record from 1894-2015 and so is up to date right up until the start of this current football season. It also includes the club's entire post war FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase records. Looking in some detail, using newspaper clippings that were supplied by the Express & Star, at the two occasions that Bilston Town have reached the FA Cup proper, in 1968/69 and 1972/73."

"It also includes information about league achievements, and cup achievements. There are also some former player biographies

that were kindly given to me by the players at their reunions that I attended between May 2013 and October 2015."

The club, currently known as Bilston Town Community FC and which plies its trade in the West Midlands Regional Premier League, won the division in 1961 and 1973, its two most significant honours to date. During the 1961 triumph, striker Ron McDermott plundered a sensational 77 league goals. Mr Hearst added: "In April of 1896 a Bilston player called S. Bond was selected to play for an England amateur international against a Scotland amateur XI. That is one of the highlights. He was a Bilston player when selected to represent his country."

On his experience of writing the book, Mr Hearst said: "It was mostly a labour of love but having a full time job meant burning the candle at both ends for many many months. But it was worth it."

To get your hands on a copy of the book visit www.bilstontownfc.weebly.com

The History of Bilston Town Football Club



The cover of Jay Hearst's book featuring the 1900-01 team

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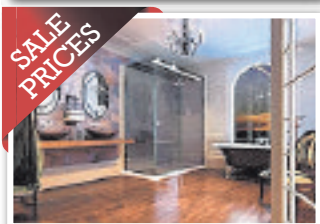
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SINCE we spend roughly a third of our lives sleeping, it's crucial that we choose the perfect bed and a long-established Brierley Hill business has the passion and expertise to help you do just that.

In fact, Dreamland Bedding Centre has been matching customers with perfect beds for the past 40 years and has established an excellent reputation for the quality of its service and products.

The family business was founded in 1976 by Mike Brown, who is such a familiar face in the local community that he is known as Mike the Bed.

The team of experienced staff is headed by manageress Carol Stock, who has been part of the Dreamland family since the beginning.

Spacious

Located in Mill Street, the spacious store has undergone expansion over the years and the showroom displays top quality beds and mattresses from famous brands including Silentnight, Slumberland, Sealy and many more.

Dreamland is proud to be National Bed Federation member stockists which means all its beds are rigorously tested for your peace of mind.

Its impressive range includes memory foam, pocket sprung, orthopaedic mattresses, beds with storage and much more.

This is backed up by a large warehouse containing hundreds of beds and mattresses, meaning your chosen product can be delivered swiftly.

"Making sure customers get the right bed at the right price was our objective from day one and it has continued to this day," said Mike.

Mike is justifiably proud of the outstanding customer service offered by his dedicated staff,



Plenty of parking at Dreamland Bedding, in Mill Street, Brierley Hill



Room to browse – so much choice on offer in the vast showroom

who focus on meeting individual needs to ensure that quality, service and value are maintained at all times.

In Dreamland's unhurried and relaxing atmosphere, friendly advisers are always happy to help you towards a great night's sleep.

This includes customers with health problems, for whom it is even more important to choose the right bed.

Easier

"Some people do come to us in pain and we want to make their lives more comfortable," said Mike.

Dreamland aims to make customers lives easier. There's plenty of room to park at the rear of the store and Dreamland deliver across

With such an excellent reputation for service it has been matching its customers with perfect beds for the past 40 years

the West Midlands, including Bromsgrove and Kidderminster.

Dreamland will deliver and assemble your new bed and take away the old one free of charge. Many customers choose to make a donation to Mary Stevens Charity, supported

by Dreamland. This has become a well known fundraising scheme with thousands of pounds raised for Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge.

Mike added: "We have raised more than £120,000 for the hospice through the delivery and removal contributions and some of the old beds have been sold in hospice's shops to generate further funds."

Dreamland attracts a lot of its business through word of mouth and recommendations.

Mike added that because they have been around for such a long time people know that they can rely on Dreamland.

Look out for Dreamland's fabulous offers and events to celebrate its 40 years in business throughout the year.

BUSINESS PROFILE

Business:

Dreamland Bedding Centre

Address:

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WHAT'S ON IN STOURBRIDGE 2016

KIKI & HENRY'S RECORD FAIR

Saturday 30th January at The Talbot Hotel, Music-lovers, join Kiki & Henry in the heart of Stourbridge town centre for another great record fair. All the vinyl your heart desires, be you a long-standing collector or having had your first record player for Christmas! Also music books, CDs and memorabilia up for grabs from our friendly traders. If you need to make some space/cash, we also buy records. Please email us at teamwhippet@yahoo.co.uk or call Henry on 07816 422214

LEMON SQUEEZY

144 high street stourbridge hold a knit and natter every saturday 2-4 Great fun bring whatever craft you are working on cost is just £1 Booking is essential pop into the shop or call on 07803783309

SUNDAY AFTERNOON ORGAN MUSIC 2015

by PAUL CARR, First Sunday of each month, 3pm at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Wordsley. Admission free www.paulcarr.co.uk Retiring collection towards the maintenance of the instrument

SOX STOURBRIDGE OXFAM QUIZ

Saturday 6th Feb.2016

19.30 Holy Trinity Amblecote Church Hall, Vicarage Road, DY8 4JA
£7.00 pp to include Fish and Chips (veg option avlb.)
Bar and Raffle Tickets from Melvyn 07740101592 or Jackie 07825437796 Oxfam.sox@gmail.com

CRAFT AND CHAT SESSIONS

Wednesday afternoons 1pm - 3pm at Fave Rave, Camp Hill, High Street, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5SD. Bring your own craft items or join in with ours. Small charge for any resources/material used

STOURBRIDGE FOOTBALL CLUB

Forthcoming matches at Stourbridge Football Club:
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LOCAL PRIDE

Making you look belle of the ball

NOT only do Jessica David have the most beautiful bridal and prom gowns that will have you looking the belle of the ball, the Stourbridge-based company is also sponsoring Miss Worcestershire 2016.

The bridal and gown company supplied Laura Beth Morgan with a stunning black and gold gown as she took the title for Miss Worcester this month.

Miss Morgan has now earned a direct pass to the finals of this year's Miss England competition with Jessica David sponsoring her along the way. Miss Morgan wants to promote positive body image to women in her year as an ambassador.

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The company is sponsoring Miss Worcestershire 2016

BUSINESS PROFILE

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Honour to be MP for this caring town

ONE thing that always strikes me about Stourbridge is the real sense of community.

Working in Westminster for much of the week, where many people do not even know their closest neighbours, I am always struck by the sense of friendship and neighbourliness that I see when I am back in Stourbridge.

As a Member of Parliament, I spend a lot of my time locally visiting schools, charities and businesses – as well as meeting local people through my surgeries or just in the shops or the street, writes **Stourbridge MP Margot James**.

It is this interaction that I value most as an MP, and I could not have asked for a better community to serve.

That sense of community extends to the many charitable works that volunteers in Stourbridge do for others.

Some great examples can be found in organisations such as Mary Stevens Hospice and Stourbridge Age Concern, and through the community support that businesses such as Tesco give to local groups such as the Survivors of Domestic Abuse charity (SODA) and the Stourbridge Township Council.

Local benevolence and community spirit in Stourbridge has a rich and enduring history too.

Today, Stourbridge residents benefit from wonderful public spaces such as Mary Stevens Park and Ste-



Stourbridge town centre, a rich heritage and thriving shops

vens Park in Wollescote – both given to the people of Stourbridge by Ernest and Mary Stevens.

On Holocaust Memorial Day this week, many will be remembering the work of Frank Foley, a former Stourbridge resident, who as a passport control officer during the 1930s helped

thousands of Jews escape from Nazi Germany.

Today and throughout history, people in Stourbridge reach out to others both in the community and those outside, to help people when they are most in need or to simply improve their lives. It is an honour to represent Stourbridge.

STOURBRIDGE CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

The Stourbridge Choir and Orchestra (SCO) was established in 1884 and has continued to perform through two world wars to the present day.

SCO is a community based choir and orchestra made up of local amateur musicians and singers who enjoy rehearsing and performing in our local area. We offer the opportunity for promotion of the musical arts in the area serving our community and encourage local people to maintain their musical skills in providing three to four concerts a year besides other smaller musical events. SCO is a registered Charity, and has also insured that all members of our community, especially disabled persons, can have access to our rehearsal and concert facilities. In addition we encourage young players and singers to attend. We often have performed with local school choirs and orchestras.

Our repertoire varies to accommodate all tastes in music. More recently we arranged a concert to commemorate the First World War and the part local Stourbridge people played in coping with this difficult time.

SCO is aware that there are a lot of musicians and singers in the area who would like to have the opportunity to start playing and singing again. No audition is required.

Please come along and give it a try and have some fun too, we do! We rehearse at The Unicorn Centre in Brettell Lane, Stourbridge, (Orchestra) on a Monday evening and at Gig Mill Methodist Church, Glebe Lane Norton, (Choir), Tuesday evening.

Please make contact for more details of rehearsal times on 01384 373111.

Our next concert is on Saturday 19th March at Redhill School, Stourbridge, 6.30 pm where we have a programme inspired by 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare with music associated with his work. Excerpts from 'West Side Story' are also included.

Tickets available on the door or by phoning the above number or from The French Deli, Coventry St, Stourbridge. Ticket costs £9, half price for children.

Further information from stourcos.org.uk Charity no 1124608



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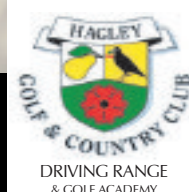
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On the case

An Inspector Calls at Wolverhampton Grand – Page 27



In a stew

Stewart Lee – Page 27



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Jason Derulo



Saturday, 6pm
Barclaycard Arena, B'ham
Hot on the heels of landing his fourth UK Number One single with 'Want To Want Me', the phenomenally successful Jason Derulo is now on tour. Aston Merrygold will support.
Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk

The Solid Life Of Sugar Water



Tuesday - Feb 6
Rep Theatre, B'ham
Phil and Alice are in love and healing wounds. Candid, uninhibited and visceral, this new play from the award-winning Jack Thorne is a tender portrait of loss, hurt and recovery.
Visit www.birmingham-rep.co.uk

Hozier



Tuesday, 7pm
O2 Academy, B'ham
The global star continues to soar with two Billboard Awards, a coveted Ivor Novello, stunning festival sets and now his one and only UK tour of 2016 before he works on a new album.
Visit www.academymusicgroup.com

David O'Doherty



Saturday, 8pm
Stafford Gatehouse
David O'Doherty, the Lidl Enya, the broken Bublé, is delighted to present an evening of talking and songs played on a stupid keyboard from 1986.
www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

POP & ROCK

Tesseract
Thu at 7pm, £13
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Evil Scarecrow
Fri at 7pm, £10
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

The Classic Rock Show
Sat at 7.30pm, £22.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Jason Derulo
Sat at 6pm, £30.20 - £40.20
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Bootleg Abba: Abba Tribute, Bee Gees Fever: Bee Gees Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Rooz
Fri at 7pm,
The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0LD.
Call 0121 753 1818

The Food Fighterz: Foo Fighters Tribute
Fri at 7pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Mayday Parade
Fri at 6.30pm, £16
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Flash Of The Blade: Guts For Glory
Sat at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Massive Attack
Sat at 7pm - 11pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

The Cadillac Three
Thu at 7pm - 11pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Neck Deep
Mon at 7pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

The Wedding Crashers
Tue at 8.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Louise Warren
Wed at 8.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Minus The Bear
Fri at 6pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Ian McCulloch
Wed at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Whitesnake UK
Fri at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Carnival Of Madness
Tue at 7pm, £32.20
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Nekrogoblkon
Mon at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Sunflower Bean
Wed at 7.30pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Awake By Design
Sat at 6.45pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

The Enid: Dust
Sat at 8pm,
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Get Inuit
Tue at 8pm,
The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham, B5 4EG.
Call 0121 632 6756

Hozier
Tue at 7pm, £22.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

ACOUSTIC & FOLK

Chris Wood
Mon at 8pm, £13 - £15
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Gordie MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys
Wed at 7.30pm,
Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, TF9 3AX.
Call 01630 654444

Transatlantic Sessions
Tue at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

BLUES & JAZZ

Malija
Fri at 8pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Ricky Cool & The In Crowd
Thu at 9.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

King Pleasure And The Biscuit Boys
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Nigel Kennedy: The New Four Seasons

Sun at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Musical Stars From The Midlands
Thu at 7pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Del Camino
Fri at 10pm, £0 - £5
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

CBSO 2015-16: Baiba Skride: Szymanowski
Thu at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CBSO 2015-16: Smooth Classics
Fri at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £47
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

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Scroobius Pip Presents We Are Lizards
Sat - Sun at 9pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

This is Tmrw Presents Mike Skinner DJ Set
Fri - Sat at 9pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

THEATRE

The Gruffalo's Child
Thu at 1.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Jack And The Beanstalk: PwC
Thu at 7pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Entertaining Angels by Richard Everett
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster, DY10 2RX.
Call 01562 743745

Anton & Erin: Just Gotta Dance
Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £19.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

The Solid Life Of Sugar Water
Tue at 8pm - 10.20pm, Wed at 8pm - 10.20pm, Thu at 8pm - 10.20pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Hatstand
Mon at 7.30pm - 10.30pm,
Kitchen Garden Cafe, King's Heath, Birmingham, B14 7SA.
Call 0121 443 4725

Land Of Our Fathers
Tue at 8pm - 10.20pm, Wed at 8pm - 10.20pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Death Of A Salesman; Crescent Theatre Company
Fri at 7.45pm, Sat at 2.45pm, 7.45pm,
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Of Mice And Men
Thu at 7.30pm, £8.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical
Sat at 8pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

The Rocky Horror Show
Fri at 5.30pm, 8.30pm, Sat at 5.30pm, 8.30pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011
The Sensational 60s Experience

Sat at 7.30pm, £20 - £25
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

An Inspector Calls
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £11.75 - £27.75
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Macbeth
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2pm, 7.30pm, £8.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Brendan Cole: A Night To Remember
Fri at 7.30pm, £19.50 - £39.50
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Aladdin
Fri at 2pm, 7.15pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.15pm, Sun at 1pm, 5.15pm, £14 - £42
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

Tiptoe Through The Tombstones
Thu at 7.30pm, £7
Whittington Village Hall, Lichfield.
Call 01543 490355

COMEDY

Roadhouse Comedy
Mon at 8pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Carl Hutchinson: Learning The Ropes
Fri at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Comedy Carousel
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Stewart Lee: A Room With A Stew
Sun at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Rinkoo Barpaga: Am I Funny?
Sat at 7.30pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

David O'Doherty: We Are All In The Gutter But Some Of Us Are Looking At David O'Doherty
Sat at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Hit revival of play calls at the Grand



Geoff Leesley as Mr Birley confronts Inspector Goole, Liam Brennan, in *An Inspector Calls* picture Mark Douet

STAGE and film director Stephen Daldry's award-winning National Theatre production of JB Priestley's classic thriller *An Inspector Calls* is staged at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, February 2 to 6.

Stephen Daldry, the Oscar-nominated director best known for *Billy Elliot* and *The Reader*, won his first major directorial success in 1992

when his visionary revival of *An Inspector Calls* at the National Theatre.

The play tells of a dinner party at the home of the wealthy Birling family shattered by the mysterious Inspector Goole and his investigation into the death of a woman.

Featuring Ian MacNeil's ingenious designs, a sweeping score by Oscar-winning composer Stephen Warbeck and atmospheric lighting

by Rick Fisher, the production has received 19 international awards, including the Olivier Award for Best Revival, Best Director, Best Designer and Tony Awards on Broadway.

The production went on to be the longest running play revival in history, in the West End for six years, on Broadway, across Australia, the United States, Japan and Europe, and has completed seven major UK tours.



Comic Stew's Room service

SOLIHULL-RAISED TV comic Stewart Lee will headline Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre to prepare for a new series on BBC 2.

Lee will perform *Room With A Stew* at the city centre venue on Sunday.

The show will feature fresh material for his new TV show *Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle*.

Lee's recent work has won starry reviews from critics with the Guardian describing him as more playful and skilful than ever. The Times wrote: "What is exhilarating is how many surprises he still throws in and how deft his jumps are from one tone to another... invigorating."

Lee follows his muse and delights when jokes arrive. "Sometimes I read that I'm this left-wing comic who just goes on about politics the whole time. Other times I read that it's just surreal nonsense about crisps. It's both of those.

Terrifying

"Or I read there's no jokes and it's just about cleverness of structure and then I read a criticism of the last series that it was an obvious bid for mainstream acceptance by being full of jokes. It's a lot of things.

"I don't know where the ideas come from and it's terrifying. They seem to be absolute flukes.

"When I was in my 20s I'd walk around with a notebook all the time and make sure I wrote down anything that occurred to me.

"Now I'm just hoping that some sort of event will descend on me."

Shows are Strictly for fans of dance

KEEP dancing with Strictly Come Dancing professionals this weekend. Tomorrow (Fri) Brendan Cole brings his *A Night To Remember* show to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. A veteran of all 13 series of Strictly, Brendan won the first with Natasha Kaplinsky and in the latest partnered Kirsty Gallacher.

On Saturday it's the Just Gotta Dance show with Anton & Erin at Birmingham Symphony Hall. Australian Erin Boag took part in series one to ten of Strictly, reaching second place with Colin Jackson. Anton du Beke is a veteran of all 13, third with Lesley Garrett in series one before reaching the final again last year with Katie Derham.

Nigel's fresh take on Four Seasons

VIOLIN virtuoso Nigel Kennedy found fame with his two-million selling 1989 recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and, after experiments with jazz, rock and Jewish klezmer music, has returned to his most famous work for a concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday.

The 59-year-old former boy prodigy has strong associations with Birmingham, not least because the Brighton-born musician is an avid Aston Villa fan.

He will perform a fresh take on *The Four Seasons*, after his latest recording which blends Vivaldi with jazz and rock, and his own compositions in *The English Collection*.

Solo gig by Mac of The Bunnymen

ECHO and The Bunnymen frontman Ian McCulloch will be giving a rare solo performance at the Robin 2 in Bilston.

Formed in Liverpool in 1978, The Bunnymen became one of the most popular indie rock bands of the 1980s.

The band's top ten singles included *The Cutter*, *The Killing Moon* and *Nothing Lasts Forever*. They released 12 studio albums between 1980 and 2014.

McCulloch will play stripped down versions of band's classic tracks, as well as songs from his own four-album solo back catalogue on Wednesday, February 3. Tickets cost £18.50 or £20 on the door for this seated show

17 - 27
FEBRUARY



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CHOICE



Matt Baker

Countryfile (BBC1, 7pm)
A round-up on how winter is affecting rural areas. Matt Baker visits a Teesdale hill farming couple who have become the stars of a documentary film, Ellie Harrison watches birds migrate in Gloucestershire, John Craven encounters a breed of hybrid wolves in Cumbria that are adapted to the cold, Sean Fletcher goes cod fishing on the North Yorkshire coast and Adam Henson reports on endangered sheep in North Ronaldsay. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Songs of Praise. **1.50** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.35** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **3.35** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. **6.30** BBC News. **6.50** Regional Programme. **7.00** **Countryfile**. A round-up on how winter is affecting rural areas, featuring reports on hill farming, migrating birds, hybrid wolves that have adapted to the cold, cod fishing and endangered sheep. Including Weather For The Week Ahead. **8.00** **Call the Midwife**. A rare disease spreads around Poplar Street, and Patsy and Dr Turner try to trace the outbreak to its source. Suspicion over the identity of the first carrier threatens to divide a previously close-knit family. Sister Winifred is forced to confront her prejudices while treating a patient, and Barbara worries about how Trixie will react when she agrees to go to dinner with Tom. **9.00** **War & Peace**. Pierre's eyes are opened to the horrors of war, Natasha falls ill and Andrei swears revenge as Napoleon's forces invade Russia and preparations are made to meet them in battle. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** **Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights**. Action from today's fourth-round ties, which were Carlisle United v Everton at Brunton Park, and Milton Keynes Dons v Chelsea at Stadium mk. **11.00** **Live at the Apollo**. Sarah Millican hosts an evening of stand-up at the Apollo in Hammersmith, London. (R) **11.30** **Film: My Brother the Devil**. (2012) Premiere. Mo, the teenage son of an Egyptian immigrant to London, idolises his older brother Rashid, a drug dealer, and longs to follow in his footsteps. However, Rashid wants Mo to make something more of his life, while realisations about himself make him question his place in the criminal underworld. Drama, starring James Floyd. **1.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** The Secret History of the British Garden. **8.00** **Countryfile**. (R) **9.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **10.30** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **11.15** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **12.00** **Film: The Alamo**. (2004) Historical Western, starring Dennis Quaid. **2.05** Tennis: Australian Open Highlights. **3.35** **Film: Ladies in Lavender**. (2004) Period drama, starring Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. **5.15** Ski Sunday. **6.00** **Film: John Carter**. (2012) An American Civil War soldier is transported to an alien planet, which is also being torn apart by conflict. He intercedes in this struggle after rescuing a princess from captivity, and must win the trust of a fierce primitive tribe to save the world. Fantasy adventure based on Edgar Rice Burroughs' series of novels, starring Taylor Kitsch and Lynn Collins. Edited for daytime broadcast. **8.00** **Dragons' Den**. Even Davis gives more would-be entrepreneurs the chance to pitch their ideas to panelists Deborah Meaden, Nick Jenkins, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman and Sarah Willingham. Among the products up for inspection are a self-serve beer pump and a trailer tent that is tall enough to stand up in – but which proves harder to erect than its creator intended. **9.00** **James May's Cars of the People**. James charts the history of 4x4 vehicles from the jeeps of the Second World War onwards, revealing how they rose in popularity in everyday use and in rallies. He explores the rivalry between Land Rover and Land Cruiser, and puts some classic vehicles through their paces by driving up Mount Fuji and through the Mojave desert. **10.00** **Film: True Grit**. (2010) A farm girl recruits a hard-drinking, one-eyed marshal to help her track down the man who killed her father. The Coen brothers' Western, with Jeff Bridges and Hailee Steinfeld. **11.45** **Film: Then She Found Me**. (2007) A teacher abandoned by her husband and facing a mid-life crisis is unexpectedly reunited with her eccentric biological mother. Comedy drama, starring Helen Hunt and Bette Midler. **1.20** Sign Zone: **Countryfile**. (R) **2.20** Holby City. (R) **3.15** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bear: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Judge Rinder. (R) **2.40** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.40** **Film: Diamonds Are Forever**. (1971) James Bond spy adventure, starring Sean Connery. **6.00** **Regional Programme: Weather**. **6.15** ITV News: Weather. **6.30** **Planet's Got Talent**. The best and worst clips from the Got Talent franchise, featuring a stunt involving an exploding limousine and a man who smashes watermelons on his head. Narrated by Warwick Davis. **7.00** **Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands**. The warrior and his allies try to make peace with a rival tribe, but are greeted with suspicion when they discover a terrible secret. David Bradley guest stars. **8.00** **Vera**. New series. A body is discovered on the Northumberland moors, and identified as a woman who made a distressed 999 call on the night of her death – suggesting she may have been abducted by someone she knew. Vera takes on the case, and discovers the victim was a controversial figure in her home town, who had a complicated relationship with her family and a number of well-hidden secrets. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** **Panda Babies**. Vet Steve Leonard visits three panda reserves in China, following the development of several of these endangered animals from newborn to one-year-old toddlers. (R) **11.15** **Premiership Rugby Union**. Mark Durdin-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 10th round of fixtures. **12.15** Jackpot247. **3.00** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** The Simpsons. (R) **4.00** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **4.55** Channel 4 News. **5.20** **Film: The Incredibles**. (2004) Pixar's animated adventure, with the voice of Craig T Nelson. **7.30** **The Jump**. New series. Davina McCall presents the third series of the celebrity winter sport challenge. The contestants in this year's show are Dean Cain, Sarah Harding, Linford Christie, James "Arg" Argent, Rebecca Adlington, Tina Hobley, Mark Francis Vandelli, Beth Tweddle, Tamara Beckwith, Brian McFadden, Louisa Lytton and Sid Owen, who spend six weeks living together in the Austrian Alps and competing in a series of sporting challenges. The first round sees them taking part in the death defying skeleton event, with the losers facing a live Air Jump to determine who will be eliminated. **9.00** **Deutschland 83**. Tischbier offers Moritz the chance to return to East Berlin, so he can donate a kidney to his mother. On his journey home, he is asked to deliver a mysterious package – but when a bombing suddenly occurs moments later, he begins to wonder what was in the box and races to prevent further bloodshed. In German. **10.00** **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown**. Jimmy Carr invites Sean Lock and Miles Jupp to go up against Jon Richardson and Sara Pascoe in the words-and-numbers quiz, while Sam Simmons helps out in Dictionary Corner. (R) **10.55** **Film: Sorority Row**. (2009) Five female students accidentally cause the death of a friend, and are stalked years later by a mysterious killer seeking justice. Horror remake, with Briana Evigan and Leah Pipes. **12.50** Embarrassing Bodies: Back to the Clinic. (R) **1.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.00** Beat My Build. (R) **4.55** Hugh's 3 Good Things. (R) **5.10** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.50** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.00** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** Lazy Town. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** The Championship: Football League Tonight. (R) **11.00** Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. (R) **11.30** Funniest Fails, Fails & Flops. (R) **12.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **1.00** **Film: The Deep End of the Ocean**. (1999) Drama, starring Michelle Pfeiffer. **3.15** **Film: No Reservations**. (2007) Romantic comedy, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart. **5.15** **Film: Hitch**. (2005) Romantic comedy, starring Will Smith and Eva Mendes. **7.25** **Film: The Wedding Date**. (2005) A single woman is horrified by the thought of attending her sister's wedding alone, a task made all the more daunting by the presence of her ex-fiance. Taking the bull by the horns, she hires a male escort for the occasion – but her decision has unexpected results. Romantic comedy, starring Debra Messing, Jack Davenport, Amy Adams, Dermot Mulroney and Sarah Parish. Edited for language and sexual content. **8.55** **5 News Weekend**. **9.00** **Celebrity Big Brother**. The remaining housemates embark on their final week, knowing only one of them can be crowned Celebrity Big Brother winner on Friday night. This has certainly been one of the most tense and argumentative houses in recent history – can it possibly get any worse as the celebrities begin to eye up the prize? **10.00** **Celebrity Botched Up Bodies**. A former Miss England who nearly died of a blood clot caused by having her breast implants removed, and a reality TV contestant who received illegal injections. Last in the series. **11.00** **Film: Red Dragon**. (2002) Thriller prequel, with Anthony Hopkins. **1.20** The Philpotts: Britain's Worst Crimes. (R) **2.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes III: Not in 3D **7.05** Great TV Mistakes **7.35** The Voice UK **9.05** **Film: Meet the Parents** (2000) **10.45** Russell Howard's Good News **11.15** Family Guy **12.20** Guckoo **3.20** Emergency Rescue Down Under **3.50** Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Pierre Boulez at the BBC: Master and Maverick **9.00** Russia's Lost Princesses **9.00** Tales from the Royal Bedchamber **10.00** **Film: A Death Row Tale**. The Fear of 13 (2015) **11.30** Horizon: What Is Reality? **12.30** The Brain with David Eagleman **1.30** Rock 'n' Roll America **2.30** Sounds of the Eighties **2.55** Danny Baker's Great Album Showdown **3.55** Close
ITV2
11.40 Take Me Out **1.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **2.00** **Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore** (2010) **3.45** **Film: The Mummy Returns** (2001) **6.15** **Film: Mr Bean's Holiday** (2007) **8.00** **Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey** (2012) **11.15** **Film: American Pie Presents Band Camp** (2005) **1.05** Release the Hounds **2.05** Planet's Funniest Animals **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
1.30 The Return of Sherlock Holmes **3.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** The Secret Life of Dogs **9.00** Caroline Quentin's National Parks **10.00** The Kindness of Strangers **11.35** **Film: Meet Joe Black** (1998) **2.50** Secret Smile **4.05** On the Buses **4.35** Heartbeat **5.25** Movies Now **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: The Masters. **5.00** Storage Wars **5.55** The Classic Car Show **7.00** Live Darts: The Masters. The quarter-finals. **11.00** **Film: Jackie Brown** (1997) **2.10** Motorway Patrol **2.30** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
12.30 Couples Come Dine with Me **2.35** **Film: Sister Act** (1992) **4.35** The Goldbergs **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.00** Rude Tube **12.05** The Inbetweeners **1.15** The IT Crowd **2.15** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **3.00** How I Met Your Mother **3.45** Hollyoaks
Film4
1.00 City of Ember (2008) **2.50** Big Business (1988) **4.45** Horton Hears a Who! (2008) **6.25** A Knight's Tale (2001) **9.00** The Two Faces of January (2014) **10.50** Law Abiding Citizen (2009)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Hannah's Law, Channel 5, 3.15pm

An orphaned girl grows up to be a bounty hunter under the tutelage of an expert gunslinger. She sets out on a personal mission to bring to justice the outlaws who murdered her parents, aided by a young Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, but the search brings shocking secrets about her past to light. Western, starring Sara Canning. (2012)

TUESDAY

Mystery Woman: Game Time, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Amateur sleuth Samantha Kinsey manages to persuade a reclusive author to attend a book-signing event – but ends up having to solve his murder. A shady video-games designer seen near the body seems the likely culprit, but she is convinced he is innocent. Mystery, starring Kellie Martin. (2005)

WEDNESDAY

Truth and Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Two former best friends and current enemies suspect each other of sending anonymous messages that threaten to expose their secrets. However, when they realise neither are behind it, the teenagers team up to investigate the source. Drama, starring Dina Meyer, Emily Tennant and Keenan Tracey. (2015)



Diamonds Are Forever, Friday, ITV, 11.10pm

THURSDAY

Garage Sale Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman becomes fascinated by a series of burglaries sweeping her home town. She notices some of the stolen items turning up in the garage sales she frequents, and decides to put her keen eye to a bargain to the task of identifying the criminals. Crime drama based on Suzi Weiner's novel, starring Lori Loughlin and Rick Ravanello. (2013)

FRIDAY

Diamonds Are Forever, ITV, 11.10pm

James Bond investigates a diamond-smuggling operation, and discovers that behind the scheme is his insidious arch-enemy Blofeld, who is planning to construct a devastating orbital doomsday weapon powered by the precious stones, which will force world powers to disarm and give him global domination. Spy adventure, starring Sean Connery. (1971)

A distressing new case awaits on the moors

TV is the new film. It's been said on many occasions, but it does seem to be true.

In the past, actors always aspired to get into movies, but not any more. In fact, these days, they're clamouring to be seen on the small screen, where the best scripts and juiciest characters seem to appear.

Brenda Blethyn has certainly enjoyed cinema success, bagging Oscar nominations for her performances in *Secrets & Lies* and *Little Voice*. But these days she's more likely to be seen solving crimes in *Vera*, which starts a new, four-part run this week.

It's the sixth series based on the best-selling novels by Ann Cleeves; the latest, *The Moth Catcher*, was released earlier this month, and an adaptation of it forms one of the forthcoming episodes.

"I attended the book launch of *The Moth Catcher*, which the third film is adapted from," says Blethyn, who is now fast friends with Cleeves. "I love it when Ann visits the set. I went to her house to enjoy a fabulous curry made

by Tim, Ann's husband. It was absolutely delicious."

The actress claims she is thrilled by the show's success.

"You always hope the project you are working on is going to be successful," she explains. "I thought the character was very interesting, different, and worthy of a series but of course there is no guarantee. So naturally we were all delighted when the first series was commissioned. And thrilled each .me it has been re-commissioned."

"And it's always nice to hear from viewers across the world who enjoy *Vera*. There was a lovely review in the *Sydney Morning Herald* recently. They love her irascible nature and many admire the fact that she commands a position of authority over men! And that the episodes are so well written."

So, what can we expect from the latest run?

"More high quality drama. I love that ITV maintain the production values of the series. The art department is second to none. The stories in the first two episodes are particularly difficult

for *Vera* to come to terms with. And as viewers have come to expect there are many great Northumberland locations."

Just don't ask her to work out whodunit before she's read the entire script: "Like most thrillers I'm kept guessing until the very end. Actually, neither does *Vera* 'guess' who the culprit is. I'm not an actor who goes to the last page first."

The series begins with an episode entitled *Dark Road*, in which *Vera* investigates the murder of 56-year-old grandmother Anne-Marie Richards, whose body has been discovered on the wild and desolate Northumberland moors.

She had a difficult relationship with her family and had recently returned to the area in a bid to reconcile with her two daughters – could one of her relatives have killed her, or will the culprit turn out to be somebody from her colourful past?

A 999 call made by Anne-Marie on the night of her murder, as well as the disturbed state of her cottage, suggests that the killer is close to home.



Brenda Blethyn stars in *Vera*, Sunday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

The Undateables: Wedding Bells Channel 4, 9pm

The fifth season of this dating show has been enthralling stuff, featuring a range of people who, while they may not have found lasting love, have had their confidence boosted by taking part. The final episode turns its attention to couples who are following in the footsteps of Tourette's sufferer and film-maker Brent Zillwood and model Challis Orme by getting married. Among those featured are Steve, whose Crouzon syndrome has always made him self-conscious, and he's now concerned that his looks may spoil his wedding to Vicky. Martin, meanwhile, suffers from a stammer that he worries may prevent him from proposing to his girlfriend, business coach Jessica. Finally Daniel, who is autistic, wonders if the girl he met at a speed dating event could be the woman of his dreams.

TUESDAY

Sugar Free Farm ITV, 8pm

Now on day four of the sugar free diet, the celebrities are settling into the farm work but there is a tantrum over chickpeas in the pig field and a heated debate over dinner. Nutritionist Angelique Panagos tries to persuade them of the positives of

a life without sugar, but even after a reality check at the hospital, Mark 'The Beast' Labbett is still reluctant to listen. Will the familiar faces find the going too tough as they do without sweet treats, or will they go the distance? Olivia Colman narrates.

WEDNESDAY

Camila's Kids Company: The Inside Story BBC1, 9pm

For many years the charity Kids Company was held up as a success story for its work with young people, while charismatic founder Camila Batmanghelidj was feted by celebrities and politicians alike. However, that began to change in 2015, when it emerged that the charity was on the edge of insolvency and that the government had demanded that Batmanghelidj stand down as the CEO. Award-winning documentary director Lynn Allaway was following Batmanghelidj when the story broke, and her documentary depicts the founder's fight to save her charity and resist the pressure to downsize. However, the film takes a dramatic turn when Kids Company is forced to close, leaving staff

reeling, the community devastated – and everyone searching for answers.

THURSDAY

Cats v Dogs: Which Is Best? BBC2, 8pm

Cats and dogs are Britain's most popular pets – but which is best? If Harry Hill's TV Burp was in charge of answering that question, no doubt the word 'fight' would be mentioned. But rather than throwing them into a ring together, it will be left up to dog-lover Chris Packham and cat fan Liz Bonnin to work out the solution. In a two-part programme, they travel the country, gathering evidence as they go in an attempt to prove their personal cases. Along the way they meet animals with amazing talents and compare modern canines and felines with their ancient counterparts. They also tackle the ultimate test – Chris takes care of Liz's cat for a week, while she looks after his dog.



Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final, Friday, Channel 5, 9pm

Keeping Up with the Khans Channel 4, 9pm

New series. Documentary exploring the impact of immigration on Page Hall in Sheffield. Each edition focuses on a different community, beginning with the refugees, fleeing war to seek asylum in Britain and battling red tape as they try to start a new life. They include Haider from Lebanon, Libyan Ehab, Cameroonian political dissident Pride and Omar from Sudan, all living together in a house rented by the Home Office. They are all in limbo, unable to work or study while they wait to hear if their request for asylum has been granted.

FRIDAY

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final Channel 5, 9pm

It's been a strange few weeks in the *Celebrity Big Brother* House – arguably the oddest moment was the misunderstanding that led US reality star Tiffany Pollard to think that fellow housemate David Gest had died, rather than Angie Bowie's rock legend ex-husband – but after all those tasks and talking at cross purposes, the series is now at an end. Although some of the biggest characters (notably Bowie and Gest) left early due to ill health, we now get to find out who made it to the bitter end, and who the British public have chosen as their winner.

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Bumpy road for this mum-to-be but for relaxation Spa beats them Hall

I HAVEN'T slept for seven months and two days," said my friend candidly. They weren't the words I wanted to hear.

Six months pregnant, the realities of impending motherhood were becoming frighteningly apparent.

Mum to a baby and a toddler, my pal looked beaten; her no-sleep claim was probably on the conservative side so as not to really scare me. Well, I was petrified.

And so there really was only one place for us – a day's escape to Hoar Cross Hall Spa and Hotel for rest and relaxation.

The Staffordshire-based countryside retreat is one of the UK's most decorated spas offering everything from one-off treatments and half-day packages to extended week-long stays (I wish).

The Jacobean-style Grade II-listed build-

By Emily Bridgewater

ing completed in 1871, is set in immaculately manicured grounds and, on the day we visited, they basked in glorious autumnal sunshine.

We enjoyed a swift and friendly check-in at the day spa's reception then headed off to the clean, modern changing rooms.

"You do want to work out, don't you?" asked my friend apprehensively, half-heartedly unpacking a pair of trainers. Er, no, not really," I replied as my pal visibly sighed with relief.

"Why don't we go for a bike ride instead?" she suggested.

And so we bypassed the impressive gym facilities and headed outdoors to use the complimentary bikes, taking a route covering the extensive gardens and country lanes around the property. If, like us, the weath-

er's on your side and you want to enjoy the enviable grounds, there are also tennis courts, boules and croquet. We agreed the hour-long cycle was a good way to work up an appetite for the sumptuous three-course lunch ahead.

Indulged

The spa's restaurant is first-class and we tucked into a table service meal of goat's cheese and balsamic onion tart followed by fresh ravioli with sun-dried tomatoes for me, and poached chicken and duchess potatoes for my friend.

There's a buffet selection of salads, breads and hot vegetables too, although we found the meal in itself to be enough. Besides, it allowed room for dessert and while Hoar Cross Hall is what used to be known as a 'health farm' in the days of the Green Goddess, there's still room for a bit of what

you fancy. With that in mind, I ordered the chocolate cheesecake and cream, while my pal indulged in the lemon tart.

Exercise done and delicious food consumed, it was time to relax and so we changed into complimentary fluffy robes and slippers. Expert beauticians are on hand to attend to your every need, offering everything from facials, hair removal, massages and manicures to make-up lessons and haircuts in the salon. I was whisked off to one of the many private rooms for a pregnancy-friendly facial and massage. Starting to feel the pains and strains of mid-pregnancy, it was blissful.

We later opted for time in the extensive pool area however, more energetic guests may prefer to take advantage of one of the many fitness classes. We could only have one possible gripe . . . that we weren't able to stay for much longer.

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Property

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING



Brave the winter chill to find a great deal

TRADITIONALLY house buying peaks in the spring but increasingly savvy movers are realising the potential advantages to buying or selling a property in the winter months.

But be cautious: whilst there are good deals to be had it is also important to consider possible pitfalls, as mistakes could be expensive as well as delaying your move.

Remember when arranging viewings, that days are shorter so you will need to visit during the day or at the weekend in order to properly view a house. Winter reveals the true condition of the property as the exterior is bare, enabling you to check the façade for cracks and damp. Inspect the guttering for blockages it might be a good idea to ask to see the loft, so you can ensure there are no roof holes or leakages.

There are fewer houses for sale in the winter but also fewer buyers which means less competition for both parties. How many times did you fall in love with a property during the summer months only to have it snatched away by another buyer? If you are selling, have you found that you have lost buyers who have been tempted by other properties?

Winter sellers tend to need to move so may be willing to accept a deal to enable a quicker exchange. The winter market can often bring a greater sense of commitment from both sides to complete the sale, as people tend to make life changing decisions in the New Year. Use this to your advantage. Also, you may find better mortgage deals as lenders try and attract off-peak customers. Winter moving generally runs more smoothly as lenders and estate agents have fewer customers to process so are able to dedicate more time to you.

Key tips when house hunting

BUYING a home – particularly your first – is likely to be the biggest purchase you will ever make, so ensuring you ask the right questions when viewing a property is essential.

The National Association of Estate Agents – the NAEA – can help. It is the UK's leading professional body for estate agency personnel, being part of a group representing 13,000 members who practice across all aspects of property services both in the UK and overseas. And the NAEA has five key tips to remember when viewing a property:

Spend some time thinking about what it is you want from your new home. What kind of property will suit your lifestyle? What location is most desirable and affordable? Do you want a garden? How many bedrooms do you need? Do you want a new or old property? Taking the time to identify what is important to you will save you time in your property search. Preparation is key. Be ready with a list of questions you want to ask the vendor and the estate agent. For example asking how long the house has been on the market may give you a clue to any potential problems with the property. You might also need to ask: what fixtures and fittings will be left? What are the neighbours like? Why the vendor is moving? What are the parking arrangements? How much does the property cost to run? In order to keep each property you view clear in your mind it is best to take notes along the way.

Be as observant. Look for any potential problems and costs such as dysfunctional guttering, cracks in the interior and exterior walls or brown stains on the ceiling that may



indicate a leaky roof for example.

Try to visualise yourself living there. Ignore the décor as much as you can and try to think about whether your furniture will fit into the house and how it will look with your style applied to it. View the property in daylight and be sure to check out the area at other times of the day: a quiet road might be manic during rush hour and a desirable neighbourhood may look different at night.

Be polite but don't feel uncomfortable looking around a house, it is a big investment to make, so it pays to be a little nosy.

Getting the home of your dreams may seem

difficult, but the process can be simplified by carrying out careful research of the market. The very first thing any modern house hunter should do is to log onto the internet where a wealth of information about the local housing market can be found. You should look at the property in local newspapers where you are interested in living. This will give you a good idea of house prices in the area.

Next, take a drive around the areas you are considering. Look at the types of properties that are around there. Take a note of what facilities are nearby and how close any train or bus routes are. Work out how long your

commute might be. Go for a walk around any areas which you like and look out for any 'For Sale' signs, and which estate agents they belong to.

After that, visit the nearest town and have a good look in the estate agents' windows. Take your time to work out a full picture of the market in the area. When you have a mortgage in principle in place, it is then the time to pay a visit or make a phone call to the agent who you think has the strongest presence in the market for the type of home you are looking for.

Arm yourself with any questions which you cannot answer yourself. Tell the estate agent your guide price range, but be flexible – you can look at houses above your budget in a slowing market, as there may be opportunity for negotiation.

Keep in mind the prime principle of property buying: location, location, location. Many argue that a smaller property in a better location will hold its value better and have a stronger resale value, than a larger home in a less desirable area.

Once you have a clear understanding of the market and what it can offer, you will be in a better position to act quickly when your estate agent shows you the right property. You will also be able to better express to the estate agent exactly what you are looking for, which will save time all round.

Remember, choosing a member of the NAEA offers higher standards, protection and a complaints procedure for you. You can search for NAEA members at <http://www.naea.co.uk/find-agent/>



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If you are thinking of selling, look no further than the estate agents in these pages for the best local advice available.

1930s home has original features and games room



A 1930s detached house with lots of character and original features in Dudley Road, Sedgley, comes with a large rear garden and a self-contained games room.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £275,000.

The accommodation comprises of entrance hall, three reception rooms including a lounge with a feature fireplace and French doors opening out to the garden, a large modern fitted kitchen with lemon coloured units and contrasting wood-effect working surfaces and floor tiling, a storage cupboard, WC and garage, a first floor with five bedrooms, en suite and a large family bathroom. It also has an ample driveway for parking to the front.

Contact Trinity Property (01384) 213395 or at www.trinityproperty.net website.



This detached house has been refurbished



AN EXTENDED detached four-bedroomed family home, 17 Maple Close, Kinver, has been refurbished to high standards with excellent attention to detail.

It is for sale through The Property Shop at £350,000. This spacious accommodation comprises an entrance hall, a guest WC, a lounge leads through to the open plan kitchen and dining room complete with contemporary light-wood effect units, a stylish island unit, integrated appliances and bi-folding doors across the full width of the room. There is also a utility room, first floor landing, three double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and a modern bathroom. On the top floor is the master suite with built-in storage and an en suite shower room.

Contact The Property Shop on (01384) 444645 or www.thepropertyshop.co.uk



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Galahad Way Stourport DY13 8SQ



TWO high quality 1950's former Police Houses on a large south facing plot in an acutely sought after location off Moorhall Drive - the properties currently inter-connect, reflecting their most recent use as a Charity Day Centre, but would revert to their original forms very easily indeed. Immense further potential, vacant possession upon completion - Freehold. Energy Rating: D

Guide Price £250,000-£300,000

Stanford Bridge Nr Abberley WR6 6SX



A Prime Development Opportunity with grandstand valley views. A sizeable detached stable with FULL Planning Permission for conversion. The scheme was approved by Malvern Hills District Council on 30 April, 2014 under application number 14/00236/FUL and provides for a substantial single storey layout offering a gross internal area of 100sq.m or 1,076 sq.ft. Externally there is also plenty of amenity and ample parking provision. Worcester & Ludlow each about 15 miles distant. Freehold.

Guide Price £125,000-£175,000

Farm Road Stourport DY13 9DQ



TWO PURPOSE BUILT MODERN FLATS built approximately 12 years ago - the properties are to be sold together as one freehold lot and have been producing an attractive combined gross rental income of £10,800 per annum. 43A will have the benefit of vacant possession and 43B is currently let at £500 per calendar month. 43A - a one-bedroom ground floor garden flat. 43B - a two-bedroom duplex flat with garden plus fine rear views over the Stour Valley. Energy Ratings: No. 43a: D / No. 43b: C

Guide Price £100,000-£120,000

New manager welcomed

Commercial feature

Stourbridge Motor House is your local Vauxhall dealership and is pleased to introduce its new general manager, Jason Stewart.

With over 14 years of experience gained at two previous Vauxhall dealerships, Jason plans to expand the business by offering customers competitively low prices backed up with the best service available.

Buying a new car is a very exciting experience. Stourbridge Motor House's new car sales team will ensure that it is also a rewarding and satisfying one.



There is a wide range of Vauxhall models available with a comprehensive choice of specifications and options. The sales team will be happy to demonstrate the car of your choice and arrange a test drive at your convenience.

Stourbridge Motor House also has a superb range of quality used vehicles with some fantastic deals currently available. All models are carefully prepared before being offered for sale and come with appropriate warranties and MoTs where required. The friendly sales team is there to answer any questions you may have and you won't feel pressurised in any way at all.

Motability

Stourbridge Motor House is also an enthusiastic supporter of Motability. The company offers a number of schemes with the widest range of specifications to suit every need. If you are a Motability customer, ask to speak to Stourbridge Motor House's Motability specialist who will be only too happy to explain the scheme to you and answer your questions.

If you require finance to assist with the purchase of your car, then the dealership can offer you a range of competitively priced packages that can be tailored to your specific circumstances, and are often better than the rates available at the banks. The sales team is fully trained to help you choose the best option and to make the process as smooth as possible. They will also take your existing vehicle in part-exchange.

All servicing and repairs are carried out in the workshop by fully-trained technicians who use the latest diagnostic equipment. They ensure that your vehicle always receives the very best of care and attention.



All service customers can take advantage of the dealership's courtesy car facility

They can provide you with highly competitive, fully inclusive service costs and will not undertake any work without first gaining your authorisation.

All service customers can take advantage of the dealership's courtesy car facility, and for those customers living locally, the company also provides a collection and delivery service by prior arrangement.

If you need a part or require a stylish accessory for your Vauxhall, then Stour-

bridge Motor House's parts department will happily oblige. The department keeps most service items in stock and the parts team can supply out-of-stock items, usually within 24r hours.

You can find Stourbridge Motor House at 47 High Street, Amblecote, near Stourbridge DY8 4DG. For further information, telephone 01384 447 970.

You can also visit www.stourbridge-motorhouse.co.uk

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Audi R8 – a car that impresses all round

By Ian Donaldson

If you ever wondered why someone buys a car like Audi's new 205mph R8 V10 asphalt scorcher here are two clues (and that faintly unreal top speed is a third).

Clue number one is a prominent button on the finely leather wrapped steering wheel; press it and the already fruity exhaust note turns so rudely vocal you can be heard in the next county. A bit anti-social and naughty... but nice.

You'll have to wait for darkness to appreciate clue number two, and be standing at the back of the car. Where you can see the engine in all its 10-cylinder glory, basking beneath a transparent cover and, extraordinarily, bathing in the glow of its own lights.

Then there's the paint choices, with many of the people ordering the first of these new models going for vivid orange. Or red, or in semi-military matt green.

You will have gathered that the R8 is not a machine for shrinking violets. Or poor ones either, with a choice of two versions, starting at £119,500 for a car with 533 horsepower, up fifteen on the outgoing model and a tiny bit more economical too – although you'll be lucky to see 20 to the gallon in everyday use.

Pay a bit more (£134,500) and your car adds a 'plus' to its title and the 5.2 litres push out a deeply impressive 602 horsepower. That elevates top speed from a mere 198mph (hah!) to all of 205mph. The sizzle to sixty-two takes either 3.2 or 3.5 seconds and either will surely feel fast enough.

These performance figures put this most powerful ever road going Audi deep into exotic Lamborghini territory at a fraction of the price. But then they're both products of the VW empire and share very similar engines. You might say that makes the Audi a bit of a bargain; not a phrase you hear often.

Lightness

Most of the early orders for the new A8 are for the dearer model which, like its less expensive sibling, is a little lighter than before and lower and wider, but shorter. A convertible model will follow in due course but there is no talk of smaller engines with fewer cylinders in the immediate future.

The added lightness is not down to paucity of equipment with the R8 which, as ever includes permanent four-wheel drive that turns the car into a properly practical all year round means of upmarket transport. There is even a modest boot at the front and enough space behind the seats for a briefcase and Gucci handbag.

Practically moves sharply down the list of this car's attributes when you fire up the engine, especially from cold. The basso thunder will awaken the gods, and perhaps the neighbours too.

There is no option of a manual gearbox this time (a scant one per cent of owners previously opted for DIY gears) but the seven-speed manages things for you so convincingly you wonder why anyone might want to do it themselves.

Paddles behind the steering wheel let you attempt full-on Hamilton mode if the mood takes you, when the vast ceramic brakes of the R8 plus version will come in handy.

More surprising than the way the car goes and stops is the way it stays comfortable, certainly on the impeccable French roads of the car's press launch and hopefully on Blighty's more challenging surfaces.

No surprises that Audi tempts with a barrage of optional extras, from variable rate steering and adaptive suspension to extraordinary laser lights (at a neatly concise £3,000) and deeply sculpted seats, which proved less comfortable than the more adjustable standard versions.

Every new R8 has a big digital dashboard display which needed more study to fully fathom than a few hours at the wheel allowed. Also standard are sat nav and a cockpit swathed in lovely leather and as well applied as ever – Audi really do build cars that impress inwardly like no other at their price.

Impress outwardly too, especially if you like your car with an edge of restrained bling.

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Economy: The Audi R8 can do 23.0mpg

Insurance group: 50

Price: £134,500

Jeep is plugging the gap

By Graham Breeze

The Renegade is probably Jeep's bravest move yet as the company goes all out to tackle a crowded small SUV sector.

And size is the first thing you notice about the Renegade, because it's much smaller than anything Jeep has made before, with bosses recognising a gap for a true four-wheel drive vehicle in the busy crossover market.

There's an immediate similarity to Skoda's Yeti thanks to the boxy shape but the Renegade is chunkier, is made of stronger stuff and is clearly recognisable as a Jeep with its circular headlights and famous grille.

Renegade is the first Fiat Chrysler Automobiles car to be jointly developed by Italian and American engineers and the first Jeep to be built in Europe but sold in the USA. It is also the first small SUV to feature rear axle disconnect.

The Renegade will stand out in any company but for those who see personalisation as a key option it is available in 11 colours with six wheel designs. There are six powertrain combinations, two MultiAir II petrol engines, a pair of MultiJet II turbo diesels and a 1.6-litre eTorque petrol.

There are also five and six-speed manual gearboxes, the Dual Dry Clutch Transmission and the nine-speed automatic gearbox. Available with two or four-wheel drive the Renegade boasts two new, advanced 4x4 systems: Jeep Active Drive and Jeep Active Drive Low.

On test was the 2.0 MultiJet Longitude 140hp 6-speed manual model with a 4x4 system supplying just the right amount of torque for any

driving situation and one of four models in the range.

The rear axle disconnect system seamlessly switches between two and four-wheel-drive to guarantee traction and keep running costs to a minimum.

There's also a choice of driving settings to suit individual preferences.

The test model had a surprising top speed of 113mph and got me to 62mph in 9.5seconds while averaging 55.4mpg on the combined cycle. For such a beast it was surprising that CO2 emission levels were only 134 g/km.

Comforting

You expect a Jeep to sound a bit on the noisy side and the Renegade didn't disappoint, and there's something comforting about the roar of the engine on this model which means you are prepared to put up with the sound.

For an on-the-road price of £23,395 you can expect 17" aluminium wheels, LED lighting, roof rails, body coloured door mirrors and handles, trailer sway damping, All speed traction control, a security alarm and a stop/start system.

The test car came with a special paint job, spare tyre, parking sensors, panoramic sunroof, heated front seats and steering wheel and a function pack which included keyless entry, height adjustable cargo floor, under seat storage and electrically folding door mirrors - all pushing the price up to £26,195.

You could also add an array of advanced safety features including Forward Collision Warning Plus with Crash Mitigation which automatically prevents or reduces the impact in low-speed shunts; ParkSense Parallel and Perpendicular Park Assist that automatically parks the car; LaneSenseTM Lane Departure Warning Plus; and Adaptive Cruise Control.



The Renegade leaves the rest of the class in its trail once you step inside. The high seating position means there's great vision all-round and if I was buying one the panoramic sunroof would be a must at £1,100 extra.

The Renegade has Jeep's Uconnect system which provides an interface between vehicle occupants and communication, entertainment and 5" navigation touchscreen with voice control. Impressively the Uconnect system enables handsfree calls from Bluetooth phones while compatible smartphones can send from

a list of 18 pre-defined text messages. The system also announces the receipt of a message, identifies the sender and 'reads' the message aloud.

Music can be streamed wirelessly while MP3 players can be connected to the premium media hub via the standard auxiliary jack or USB port and charged. The AM/FM DAB radio can be controlled by voice commands.

The Renegade also has a full-colour instrument cluster which sits in front of the driver, displaying information using a combination of

graphics and text. The sort of impressive technology you don't normally associate with Jeep.

It's a brave step by Jeep to drop a vehicle into the SUV sector and the company is likely to attract a lot of buyers unable to afford to get into the big four-wheel-drive market.

Jeep sales are booming in America and Europe with Renegade popular in Italy, France and Austria as has picked up awards in the UK, Italy, France and Spain.

Renegade has the looks and the performance to be a big player in the SUV sector.



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Working 40 hours per week salary £7-8 (depending on experience)

Expanding family run business providing specialist component finishing service to a range of customers

Experience of working on a busy factory shop floor beneficial. You will need to be a team player, flexible and able to follow written and verbal instructions accurately. Able to perform process related tasks including jiggling components ready for processing in our deburring and degreasing shops.

To apply please send your CV and covering letter to Mrs Susan Arrowsmith, Director, Midland Deburr and Finish Limited, Unit 5, Lye Valley Industrial Estate, Bromley Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8HX.

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

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STAR

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The successful applicant will be responsible for the security of the building and site during out of hours working. There is a rotating shift pattern in operation with other officers and the position involves both weekend and bank holiday working.

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If you are interested in applying for this role please send your full CV and cover letter to:

HR DEPARTMENT
MIDLAND NEWS ASSOCIATION
51 - 53 QUEEN STREET
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV1 1ES
E-MAIL: HR@MNMEDIA.CO.UK

Closing date: 31st January, 2016

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO WORK AND TRAVEL WITH OUR CHAIRMAN

We need a personal assistant to work and travel with our Chairman. You would have to be free to travel to three bases of the company which are also his three homes - Canada, Britain and Bahamas. You would live in these homes with all expenses paid. Arranging meetings, ensuring that all three home bases are in order would be a main duty along with interacting communication between all points. The job would also include arranging functions and dealing with publicity. A full driving Licence is required. Email CV to anne.dunning@outlook.com

HARLOW TIMBER Kidderminster

Have vacancies for wood machinists to set and operate six head moulders and band re-saws. Experience preferred although training will be given to right candidates

Logistics Coordinator

Required for busy timber yard. Responsible for overseeing all yard operations - goods inwards and outwards. Experience required

Trainee Sales Administrator

Enthusiastic person required to learn all aspects of internal sales admin. Must be computer literate with a confident telephone manner. Please send your CV to Tim Darby, General Manager t.darby@harlowbro.co.uk

Logistics Coordinator

Required for busy timber yard. Responsible for overseeing all yard operations - goods inwards and outwards. Experience required

Trainee Sales Administrator

Enthusiastic person required to learn all aspects of internal sales admin. Must be computer literate with a confident telephone manner. Please send your CV to Tim Darby, General Manager t.darby@harlowbro.co.uk

FORD MONDEO 2 LITRE LX 2002
Green, A/C, CD, alloys, very good condition, MoT June 16, just serviced, 2 owners, 49,000 genuine miles. £1,350 ovno. 07887 593617.

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HONDA JAZZ 1.4, 2002, 73,000 miles, silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, alarm, long MoT, £1,295. 07792 356203.

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NISSAN MICRA, 05, Full MoT, Engine 40,000 miles, very good condition. £1,050. 01384 251395 or 07972 169554.

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2006, 06 reg, 3 owners, 108,000 miles, fsh, 11 months MoT, good tyres all round, recent service and MoT. £950.

01902 753118 07775 901378.
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motorbikes

PEUGEOT VIVA CITY 100, 2007, MoT June 2016, 2550 ono. 07909 942618.

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MOBILE MECHANICS Service & repairs. Headgaskets, clutches and cambelts. 07747 848469.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

highways england

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(a) THE M5 MOTORWAY (JUNCTIONS 4-3) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2016

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT Highways England Company Limited (Company No. 9346363) has made an Order on the M5 Motorway, in the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley and in the County of Worcestershire, to allow carriageway repairs to be carried out. The effect of the Order will be to close -

(1) the northbound carriageway of the M5 from its junction from the exit slip road at Junction 4 to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 3; and (2) the slip road leading to the northbound carriageway of the M5 at Junction 4. The work will be carried out over one night between 22:00 hours and 05:00 hours and is expected to start on Tuesday 2 February 2016. The Order will come into force on 29 January 2016.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes and vehicles being used in connection with the works, or by a traffic officer, will be exempt from the closures.

A diversion route via the A491 and the A456 will be signed. For further information, please contact Matthew Taylor on 0121 687 2550.

Karen Eustace, an officer in Highways England Company Limited. Highways England Company Limited (Company No. 9346363) registered office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4LZ. A Company registered in England and Wales.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 - ARTICLE 15(4)

Application Number: 55/16/01/662 W

Mr M Allen - Application not to comply with (to vary) condition 4 of planning permission 55/14/01/662 W to extend the infilling operations for 12 months until 31 December 2016 in order to complete the improvements to the existing driving range at Swindon Driving Range Ltd, Bridgnorth Road, Dudley. The proposed development may not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area as the land to which the application relates is situated within the Green Belt.

Members of the public may view the submitted application, plans and other documents via the Staffordshire Planning web page www.staffordshire.gov.uk/planning ('Find a current application'). Anyone who wishes to make representations about this application should do so no later than 18 February 2016 by commenting on-line via the Staffordshire Planning web page; by emailing to planning@staffordshire.gov.uk; or, by writing to Planning, Policy & Development Control, Staffordshire County Council, 2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH. Please note: all comments and representations received in writing will be taken into account and are open to be read by all.

Signed: Darryl Evers on behalf of Staffordshire County Council
Date: 28 January 2016

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience, you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
www.dudley.gov.uk
Licensing Act 2003

Notice of application for a variation of a Premises Licence (Section 34 of the Act) has been made by Scary Canary of 108a High Street, Stourbridge DY8 1EE.

The proposed variations from the existing Licence are as follows: To extend the licensable activities hours from the existing hours of 12.00 - 23.00 to new hours of 10.00 - 02.00 each day of the week.

The variation is not proposed to utilise the extended hours all of the time but to be put into place as a flexibility to certain events held on the premises (most ticketed, private or invite only events).

The full application can be inspected by contacting the Licensing Section (see below) between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm (Mondays to Fridays except public holidays).

Any representations by a Responsible Authority or Interested Party must be made in writing between: 26/1/16 and 22/2/16 to Assistant Director, Law & Governance, Licensing Services, Unit 1 Hurst Business Park, Narrowboat Way, Brierley Hill DY5 1UF.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5,000.

PAMELA COOPER (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 8 Oak Tree Gardens Worlebury Stourbridge DY8 5YF, who died on 28/06/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 28/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice. **QUALITYSOLICITORS TALBOTS** 63 Market Street Stourbridge DY8 1AQ T462428

Classified Ads

JUNE MARY CAMPBELL (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of The Coach House Nursing Home Prestwood formerly of New Wood Lodge 173 Brighnorth Road DY7 6RY, who died on 10/11/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 08/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

COLEY & TILLEY
Neville House Waterloo Street
Birmingham B2 5UF

T665482

DOUGLAS EDWARD COPE (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Glenrock 30 Bromwich Lane Pedmore Stourbridge West Midlands DY9 0QZ, who died on 03/01/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 08/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

GEORGE GREEN LLP
195 High Street Cradley Heath
West Midlands B64 5HW

T662142

ATTRACTIVE LADY for single fun Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420791
ATTRACTIVE FEMALE REG Tel No: 01902 489 181
SINGLE divorced professional woman seeking a man to share her life with
Please write to Box Number P20207, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

GENUINE, CARING, QUIET PETITE BRUNETTE 32.
Own home and car, seeks similar male 30-45, no tattoos or piercings, no emotional baggage please.
Respond with photo to
PO BOX 7111
Kingswinford
DY6 6AU.

NEW YEAR, NEW START
Attractive 36 year old male, whose genuine, honest, caring and is fun to be around.
I am looking for a like minded genuine lady aged 27 to 44 years for quality nights in and out, holidays, weekends away and who like going to football matches for friendship hopefully leading to relationship.
Genuine replies only.
Photo appreciated (returned).
Box Number C20211, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WOLVERHAMPTON GUY, 55
Slim, fit, single, own house and car, non smoker, very loving, understanding, WLTm slim, medium lady, local, for genuine friendship / relationship.
Please write to Box Number P20207, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

2016 PRINCE CHARMING
Aged 60's, young at heart with lots to offer the right princess 2016, aged between 55-66 years old with a GSOH of slim build to make a fresh start in 2016.

The past has gone ladies, so ladies don't delay reply straight away.
All letters replied to, Box Number P20209, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

general

BEV 30yr old curvy attractive female, likes music, travel, animals, cosy nights in front of a log fire, looking for affectionate male for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420715

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box: 420237

SUE, 46, confident professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420701

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

CAROLINE, 42yrs, slim attractive blonde, varied interests and solvent, WLTm honest male of any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420685

SALLY, 24yrs tall brunette with feminine curves seeks mature older chap, 35+ for discreet fun only, must be experienced. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box: 420247

CHRIS, 67, brunette, cuddly, WLTm caring, kind gentleman, for days out, meals out, walks etc and for just being together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420667

ROSIE, 43yrs, bored and lonely, I don't get out much but would like to meet a nice chap, married or single, fun only pls. Text only Box 4078225

LILY, genuine lady looking for a genuine man. I like cosy nights in and am a smoker. Text only mailbox no: 5372466

JENNI, hairdresser, brunette, caring and fun. WLTm chap any age, must be discreet with car, I have a nice home to meet in. Text only Box: 4139156

TRISH, 44, tall slim young/good looking GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves TLC, WLTm male who also likes to be in a loving relationship. 39-50yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420601

KAREN, curvy brunette, 42yrs loves men of all ages and sizes but must make me laugh. I am married with open marriage. Text only Box: 4020257

SAMANTHA pretty brunette, very busty 36, intelligent, independent with a real lust for life, seeks big-hearted stocky male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420599

MADDIE extremely passionate female 37, seeks reliable male to enjoy the finer things in life and tactile relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420563

Express & Star

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REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

MICHELLE 39yr old nurse, slim, petite, blonde, blue eyes, looking to enjoy life with similar romantic, caring guy. Single and available. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420791

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

CAROL 37 attractive slim blonde, curves in all the right places, nice personality, good company, looking for caring man for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420757

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3007 Box 418167

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420729

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

BEV 30yr old curvy attractive female, likes music, travel, animals, cosy nights in front of a log fire, looking for affectionate male for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420715

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MADDIE extremely passionate female 37, seeks reliable male to enjoy the finer things in life and tactile relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420563

CHRIS, 40, attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420491

SALLY, 46, slim attractive feisty redhead, intelligent, easygoing, WLTm similar male for friendship and more, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420475

LOUISE, 47, youthful looking female looking for spontaneous male to put some love and lust back into life. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420445

ALEXA 49 - slim, attractive, long-haired music loving female, with many interests including dining out, the arts, photography WLTm similar male. Text only to Mailbox no: 5345662

YVONNE, single mum, happy with life, but would like to meet someone to share fun times with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420269

CHLOE pretty single female 36yrs, dark hair/eyes, slim build, very lonely and looking for reliable discreet male for mutual companionship maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420359

JULIE, 47, blonde brown eyes, size 12, varied interests, loves cuddling, kissing and showing affection, seeks similar energetic male friend for TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420357

ANN, 38, very attractive female, N/S, positive attitude to life, WLTm similar kind male with a lot of get up and go for romance and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420355

JACKIE lonely and looking for male company, 48-65. Need a bit of love and affection? Then I'm your girl, call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418169

SARAH, curvaceous brunette, 35, passionate nature, solvent, OHAC, WLTm date again, looking for male to take me out. Looks/Age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420207

LYN, 43, divorced very lonely single mum, young looking, slim, attractive, WLTm similar male for companionship. Age/looks/Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418795

WIDOW 50, blonde hair, GSOH, 5ft 5ins, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415767

JANE, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cosy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417985

SUSANNAH, 48, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417341

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc. WLTm male for mutual companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420195

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420175

TARA 22 tall slim but curvy with legs that go all the way up to heaven, WLTm very appreciative confident male for adult fun. Contact me anytime. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414701

LISA 38 slim attractive blonde, looking for a man who will appreciate a feminine, fashionable, fun, romantic sensual woman with a mind of her own. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419839

FEMALE, dark haired 5'10, curvy, likes reading, walking, cinema, seeks male 40-50 for lasting relationship. Text only to Mailbox no: 5077545

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Text.. REPLY26 (leave a space) the six-digit box number (leave a space) and then enter your message & send to 0906 500 3955

fully received messages cost £1.50 per message. You must always leave contact details each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for safety and security.

http://dating.expressandstar.com

PROFESSIONAL black female

age 52, enjoys evenings and

days out, would like to meet

similar Midlands male. Text only

to Mailbox no: 5315901

CATHY, 42, good looking

brunette with a real passion for

life, seeking male for happy

times, dates, chats, romance and

more. Pls call. Tel No: 0906 500

3955 Box No: 420073

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive,

26, seeking male for friendship,

maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500

3955 Box No: 416287

MAGGIE, 72 yrs young, good

sense of humour, well presented,

WLTm kind, sincere chap to

share coffee and a chat. Text

only to Mailbox no: 5310040

LOUISE 35, dark hair, blue eyes,

attractive ex air hostess, looking

for fun times with older male for

romantic nights in and more. Tel

No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420043

39 yr old independent single

Mom, knows the benefit of

having a good man in the picture.

Text only to Mailbox no:

5084796

BLACK lady seeks white male

over 60, any location, for

friendship and hopefully a lot

more. Text only to Mailbox no:

4256384

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed

brunette, fit and active, seeks

similar male to have a laugh with.

Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:

419417

FRANCES, 45, busty female,

loves nights in/out, seeking

uncomplicated male who can

occupy my free time for quality

companionship. Tel No: 0906

500 3955 Box No: 420003

FEMALE, seeks fun loving male

who likes a drink and a laugh, to

enjoy erotic experiences with a

curvy brunette. Discretion

guaranteed. Text only to

Mailbox no: 5079311

Wayne, 40, cheeky, good

career, likes gym. Looking for a

lady who likes stimulating

conversation and times. Tel No:

0906 500 3955 Box No: 419829

DARREN, 44, slim build, dark

brown hair, green eyes, seeks

genuine female for friendship,

maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500

3955 Box No: 418809

MALE, 59, 5ft2, average build,

seeks genuine, caring, lady, 55-

65. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box

No: 420721

JOSEPH attractive Asian male,

seeking attractive, genuine

female, 38-50 for friendship and

companionship. Tel No: 0906

500 3955 Box No: 410267

HANDSOME, attractive, fit,

Indian, professional trucker, 38,

WLTm attractive, honest, caring

lady/mum, 31-45 for LTR. Colour

unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500

3955 Box No: 219790

ATTRACTIVE male 56 seeks

dom female 40 to 70 for close

adult fun, any status or size. Text

only to mailbox: 4347071

MATURE male, 6ft, slim, fit,

clean and smart, residing in

central Birmingham, seeks

slimish female for fun times. Text

only to mailbox: 5383053

MAN 55yrs, 6ft med build, single,

looking for a special lady to

share no strings fun and good

times Age/status unimportant.

Text only to mailbox: 5381487

KALU 26 years old single

dark/black good looking man

looking for a good-looking

women for sex fun. Text only to

mailbox: 53

Upton away for a push towards title class

UNBEATEN Pauly Upton will return to action in Walsall next month – and he's keen to push towards title class.

The Ricky Hatton-trained super-welterweight will face Brighton's experienced Kevin McCauley on February 19 as part of his preparations for a potential Irish title tilt in the spring.

"It's time for me to push on and start getting some belts around my waist," the 27-year-old said. "I'm going to use it to sharpen up my skills before going after the Irish title."

"McCauley is as tough as old boots so he's ideal. Afterwards I think I'll be ready to move up to ten-rounders and show people what I can really do."

Although born in London, Upton comes from proud Irish stock and spent much of his childhood in Dublin and Belfast. He followed in his grandfather's footsteps by boxing for Ireland as an amateur.

"My whole family is Irish so it's always been my goal to win the Irish title," he said.

The Walsall Town Hall show is a co-promotion between Hatton Promotions and Black Country Boxing, headlined by Halesowen's Lennox Clarke in an eight rounder with Harlow's Richard Horton.

Wednesbury's Sam Evans is back in action with Nantwich's Nathan Gorman and Market Harborough's Reuben Arrowsmith also on the undercard, alongside West Bromwich heavyweight Matt Gordon, highly-rated Swadlincote prospect Zach Parker, Old Hill's stylish Manny 'Pac Man' Zaber, Stoke's Kieran McLaren and Birmingham puncher Luke Heron (Walker).

Heathens are plotting their own stadium

CRADLEY insist they are willing to listen to anybody who may be able to help in their quest to find land for a stadium of their own.

The Heathens have announced they will host their first meeting back at Monmore Green on Easter Monday, March 28. However, club bosses remain desperate to achieve their goal of finding the club a home track of their own within the area.

With their search for a suitable plot of land ongoing, club director Nigel Pearson says any individuals or businesses who may have land available should get in touch.

Fewer than 30 tickets remain for the Heathens' Season Launch Night at Cradley Heath Liberal Club, at 8pm on Monday, March 21. They are £5 from the club shop in Cradley Heath Market or at cradleyheathens.co via PayPal.

Black Country joy as girls claim win



Black Country girls show their togetherness

BLACK Country Under-16 Girls performed admirably on their way to securing a place in the national quarter-finals.

The combined team, with players from Tettenhall Tigers, Redhill-Stourbridge and Cleobury, travelled to Manchester to take on Tameside, Wigan and Wirral.

Tameside are the most successful junior women's club in the country with a raft of national championships to their name, but Black Country claimed shock victory, winning

25-19, 25-17. The girls went on to keep their nerve and see out two other matches against Wigan and Wirral, claiming two victories by two sets to one.

The girls now train for their next clash that sees them travel to Kettering in March.

Tettenhall Tigers women's team put up a valiant fight against a vastly-experienced Cleobury in the Division One West Midlands Regional League, but fell to a 3-0 defeat. The Tettenhall side, with an average age

of just 15, were able to put pressure on the Cleobury team with spells of jump and float serves and dynamic back court play.

Despite making various substitutions to counter Cleobury's hard-hitting attack, the youngsters were unable to secure the points.

Tigers coach Nick Shaffrey said: "The result was a great experience for the team, who will now compete in the regional round of the national under-15 championships at the end of the month."

Gym project will be tribute to Steve

PRIORY Park Boxing Club has vowed to win its latest battle so it can pay a fitting tribute to vice-chairman Steve Gough.

The Dudley-based club is striving to finish the refurbishment of its Priory Road base and chairman Paul Gough is determined to see the job through in honour of his cousin Steve, who recently died.

Aged 55, Steve played a crucial role alongside Paul in the club's impressive growth over the past two decades.

The duo forged a strong bond both inside and outside the ring and an emotional Paul paid a heartfelt tribute to a man who was the life and soul of the club.

"He was just a really likeable guy," said Paul. "We weren't like cousins, we were more like brothers."

"My wife Georgina and Steve's wife Tracey are sisters. He actually got Georgina and myself together."

"The whole family is devastated. This is a massive shock. He had been ill but he was on the mend. He was getting better."

Void

"On the Wednesday at training he was great, he was laughing and joking with all the lads. He was a proper joker. He loved playing practical jokes on the lads."

"There is a massive void at the club that can never be filled. It just makes everyone more determined to crack on and ensure the club keeps moving in the right direction."

"It makes us more determined now to get the gym finished."

"Then when we open the gym we can honour his name and have a memorial in there for him, so that he will always be remembered for all the years he put in."

Steve was a well-known figure on the local boxing scene and messages of support have been flooding in.

"The response has been amazing," said Paul.

"The support from people and the offers of help have been brilliant. I am sure he will have a massive turnout at his funeral."



Priory Park's Paul Gough, left, has paid tribute to his late cousin Steve

The club have enjoyed numerous successes down the years after the Goughs took charge.

Paul said: "Steve got into boxing through me, because I used to box. He had always liked the sport but his background was rugby."

"He was a very good player and turned down the chance of a contract with St Helens when he left school because he didn't want to leave the area."

"We started off with one boxer and it just kept get-

ting bigger and bigger. I concentrated on the training and he ran the gym and took care of all the organisation. He was the head of the committee really."

"We have had a lot of success over the years and Steve made that possible."

Steve is survived by widow Tracey and son Mitchell.

The funeral will take place at Gornal Crematorium at 12.20pm on Tuesday, February 2. Family flowers only. Donations to Priory Park Boxing Club.

Police force their way into title reckoning

PRACTICE made perfect for Norton Social A's Adam Ness in the Stourbridge Snooker League.

Before the Premier Division clash with Baggeridge Social, Ness warmed up with a 132 break and then rolled in a 108 to help the reigning champions edge home.

Title rivals West Midlands Police and Brandhall Labour went head-to-head with the Police bagging a 3-2 win.

Amblecote Institute A won 3-2 at Hotshots SC B. The two Pockets SC teams went down to the last frame with the A team prevailing.

Kinver Cons B's Division One title hopes received a double boost as they beat Norton Social B 4-1 while second-placed Kingswinford Cons B were beaten 4-1 at Amblecote Institute A.

Moor Pool & Snooker C ended a run of 10 defeats with a 3-2 triumph at Stourbridge Institute A.

In Division Two, the top three all enjoyed 4-1 victories.

Stourbridge Old Edwardians won at Kinver Cons D, while Amblecote RBL A fought off Stourbridge Institute C. The Legion's B team also won 4-1 at Amblecote Institute C.

Bottom team, Stourbridge Institute D, enjoyed a 4-1 win over Amblecote Institute D.

Results – Premier Division: Hotshots SC B 2 Amblecote Inst A 3; Norton Social A 3 Baggeridge Social 2; West Midlands Police 3 Brandhall Labour 2; Pockets SC B 2 Pockets SC A 3. **Byes:** Moor Pool & Snooker A, Hotshots SC A. **First Division:** Amblecote Inst B 4 Kingswinford Cons B 1; Wombourne 3 Kinver Cons C 2; Kingswinford Cons A 3 Kinver Cons A 2; Kinver Const B 4 Norton Social B 1; Stourbridge Inst A 2 Moor Pool & Snooker C 3.

Second Division: Amblecote RBL A 4 Stourbridge Inst C 1; Amblecote Institute C 1 Amblecote RBL B 4; Stourbridge Institute D 4 Amblecote Inst D 1; Kingswinford SC 3 Kingswinford Cons C 2; Kinver Cons D 1. **3/2 Old Edwardians 4. Bye:** Kingswinford Cons D.

Team win by Myles for first since August

Team Dudley 2 Kington Town 1 TEAM Dudley recorded their first win since August 29 and this win at The Dell gave them a boost to beat the drop into the West Midlands Regional League Division Two.

The students took a deserved lead on the half hour mark when Myles Nettleford scored from a Matt Simmons corner.

The lead lasted 10 minutes before the visitors from the Welsh border equalised, Miles Langford catching the ball on the half volley and rifling it past Liam Jones and into the back of the net.

With 10 minutes gone in the second half it was 2-1 Team Dudley as Nettleford dinked the ball over the 'keeper and then side-footed home.

Nettleford was close to a hat-trick, heading just over, and Nathan Jones hit the post.

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Dismissal no hindrance to Glassboys

Stourbridge 3 Skelmersdale 1
THE Glassboys stepped up their promotion push with a convincing win over Skelmersdale despite being reduced to 10 men for most of the second half.

Stourbridge made all the early running as Skelmersdale defended in depth while relying on lone striker Max Hazeldine to break quickly.

Their plan worked to perfection on 26 minutes when Hazeldine beat Stourbridge's offside trap and chased a ball thumped up the middle of the park by Kenny Strickland before cleverly lobbing home over advancing Glassboys goalkeeper Charlie Price.

Stourbridge soon hit back with two goals in as many minutes. Karl Hawley levelled on 34 minutes with a superbly taken goal – his 20th of the season – latching onto a pass from Matt Dodd with his back to goal and turning two Skelmersdale defenders before firing into the roof of the net.

Havoc

Two minutes later, they went ahead when Hawley again caused havoc in a crowded Skelmersdale goalmouth with two attempted shots on the turn before the ball fell kindly for Dodd to slot home from close range.

Hazeldine continued to prove a threat for Skelmersdale on the break and raced clear again right on the stroke of half-time – but this time he was denied thanks to Price who kept the ball out with his outstretched foot.

The game threatened to turn on its head after 56 minutes when

The Glassboys were a man down after Dodd was sent off for a late challenge on Strickland after 56 minutes.

But Stourbridge continued to impress with 10 men and increased the lead on 62 minutes when central defender Dan Scarr climbed highest to a Leon Broadhurst free kick and headed home.

Helen back in form to come home first for running club

AFTER all the recent cross country action it was a quiet weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club with only three club members pulling on the blue hoops and pinning a number to the vest.

Even then they had to travel some distance to do so.

With not much on the local calendar, those looking for competition travelled to the Coed y Brenin Forest deep in Snowdonia for the Winter Trail Wales.

This is a tough event over muddy trails and fire trails with some significant climbs throughout the half marathon route and rumoured to be much greater than the traditional 13.1 mile distance.

After an enforced break due to injury Helen Tromans was back on form and first back for the club in 123rd overall and sixth in her age group in a time of 1:58.51.

Peter Krivosic claimed 436th place in 2:50.40 and Sarah Krivosic finished in 478th in 3:05.53.

Aston vows to come back fighting



Ahmet Patterson knocks down Ryan Aston

DUDLEY'S Ryan Aston vowed to come back fighting after his step up in class went up in smoke on Friday night, writes Craig Birch.

Aston's dreams of lifting the IBF International light middleweight title live on BoxNation were destroyed in six rounds by the classy Ahmet Patterson.

Their 12-round bout only went half of the distance, with Aston down once in the fifth and twice in the sixth, with the first knockdown of the sixth ruled a low blow.

It's now back to the drawing board for the 24-year-old, who has lost all three of his major

Boxing

title shots. This belt, which came with a top 15 world ranking with the IBF, followed unsuccessful attempts for the Midlands crown at light middle and middleweight.

"Tank" had also dedicated the fight to Steve Gough, the late vice-president of Priory Park Boxing Club, where he was an amateur and now fights out of the pro section.

Aston said: "I need to learn from this and move on. This was in memory of Steve. It wasn't the result he would've wanted, but I'll be back."

STOUR PAY FOR ILL-DISCIPLINE

Preston Grasshoppers 29 Stourbridge 18
DESPITE outscoring their opponents by three tries to two Stour left Lightfoot Green empty-handed, victims of their own indiscipline which gifted Preston fullback Sean Taylor five penalty goals.

The scoreboard margin proved just too much for their late rally to claw back.

Preston opened the scoring, a maul side entry in Stour's 22 giving Taylor the opportunity to calibrate his kicking radar. A similar offence at the other end produced a more difficult opportunity but Stour outside-half Rod Petty slotted it before Nathan Bressington showed some neat footwork to score in the corner.

Preston kicked a penalty award to the corner and ground a maul over the line, no.8 Alastair Murray scoring the try which Taylor converted.

With the hosts preferring the aerial route Stour conceded another penalty, Taylor's kick drifting wide. But a knock on gifted the hosts another bite at the cherry and a further penalty award was kicked this time.

The hosts got a nudge on at a scrum and kicked the penalty award to Stour's 22 where a further penalty award was landed by Taylor. Further indiscipline continued to cost Stour possession and territory, referee Callum Sharpe finally losing patience and yellow carding second row Robbie Hurrell.

Taylor then added a further penalty as the depleted Stour defences failed to heed the lesson, centre Joe Heatley joining Hurrell in the sinbin for a red zone infringement.

Into the final quarter and Stour scrum half Toby Handley spotted a gap to touch down.

But disaster struck when an unpunished high hit on replacement hooker Billy Harding saw the ball go loose near Stour's 22. It was hacked through and with the cover wrong-footed Murray pounced to score his second try, which was converted. Replacement Connor Nicholls drove over for the visitors' third try.

On Saturday, January 30, Stour host Leicester Lions at Stourton Park, kick off 3pm.



Stourbridge full back Joe Bridger takes the ball into contact during the Grasshoppers clash

Hopes of bonus points are scuppered

Bournville 28 DK 17

DK did not get off to the best of starts when Duncan Tompkins put a penalty wide, then, following a good period of pressure, Shif Shillingford powered over the line but saw his try disallowed.

DK were given a five-metre scrum. Apparently, the referee deemed that he had prevented

a tackle being made, but those five points would have given DK a losing bonus point, and perhaps changed the whole game.

Bournville then took a 5-0 lead, and, after a player from each side was sin-binned, the lead was extended with a penalty. A try made it 13-0 at the break and after half-time,

Tompkins converted a DK try to reduce the arrears.

A superb try, converted by Tompkins and a penalty from the same player put DK in front. But Ed Parry received a yellow, the ensuing penalty making it 17-16.

Into the last ten minutes with 14 men, two tries denied DK a losing bonus point.

Russell and Giles help Hagley home

Pedmore (117-11) beat Enville 'B' (99 all out) by 18 runs

PEDMORE, in their first game of the 2016 WCB Indoor Cricket campaign, fielded a strong side on paper which may account for them being put in.

The openers showed signs of rustiness, especially Dave Skelding (26 no). Captain Matt Porter (24) was more fluent and kept the score moving. Losing Porter at 66, the experienced James Burgoyne set about the bowling scoring 27, with Skelding still struggling until his retirement in the 10th over. John Herdman added late runs for Pedmore without further loss. Tom Davies bowled his three overs for 27.

Enville B started their reply very cautiously, opening pair Nick Insley and Jon Howells putting on 61 for the first wicket with Howells retiring.

The inexperience of the remaining Enville batsman showed as two run outs followed, reducing Enville to 77-3. The return of the openers gave Enville renewed hope of a victory but two smart run outs by Dan Such ended the innings on 99.

Oldswinford (116-3) lost to Hagley (118-2) by four wickets

OLDSWINFORD openers Harry Stanier (28) and Owen Williams (32 no) ran quickly between wickets.

Stanier retired first, then Tom Blunt (25 no) used his experience before the return of Williams with Blunt enabled a run fest in the remaining three overs.

Hagley in reply started with Joe Lennon (28 no) blasting the ball straight back past the bowlers. At the loss of his partner at 16, Paul Morgan (25 no) joined Lennon in a crucial stand.

Oldswinford slowed the new batsmen and were back in the game until Dan Giles (25 no) added new momentum and guided Hagley home with James Russell.

Defeat deals blow to play-off hopes

Workington 3 Halesowen 0

HALESOWEN'S hopes of making the play-offs suffered a blow with a 3-0 defeat at Workington who improved their own chances by moving into third place.

Workington were two up at half-time thanks to goals from Sam Smith and Gareth Arnison.

Halesowen did improve in the second half although Shaun Rowley was forced to make some good saves to keep Workington at bay.

The home side did increase their lead four minutes from time when Connor Tinnion finished off a neat passing move inside the area.

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